



The Creative Woman



AMERICAN INDIAN WOMEN

FALL 1987

10th Anniversary Issue



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The Creative Woman is published three times a year by Governors State University. We focus on a special topic in each issue, presented from a feminist perspective. We celebrate the creative achievements of women in many fields and appeal to inquiring minds. We publish fiction, poetry, book reviews, articles, photography and original graphics.

Cover artwork, *The First Ceremony, Mother and Child*, by Joan Hill. See her article on page 19.

About Our Guest Editor:

Clara Sue Kidwell was born in Oklahoma and received her bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees from the University of Oklahoma. Her field is history, with particular concentration in the history of science. She has taught at the University of Minnesota and Dartmouth College and has been from 1974 until the present in the Native American Studies Program at the University of California, Berkeley, where she now holds the rank of Associate Professor.

She serves on the Advisory Board of the D'Arcy McNickle Center for the History of the American Indian of the Newberry Library. She is a member of the Indian Rights Committee of the ACLU, the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science, and the History of Science Society.

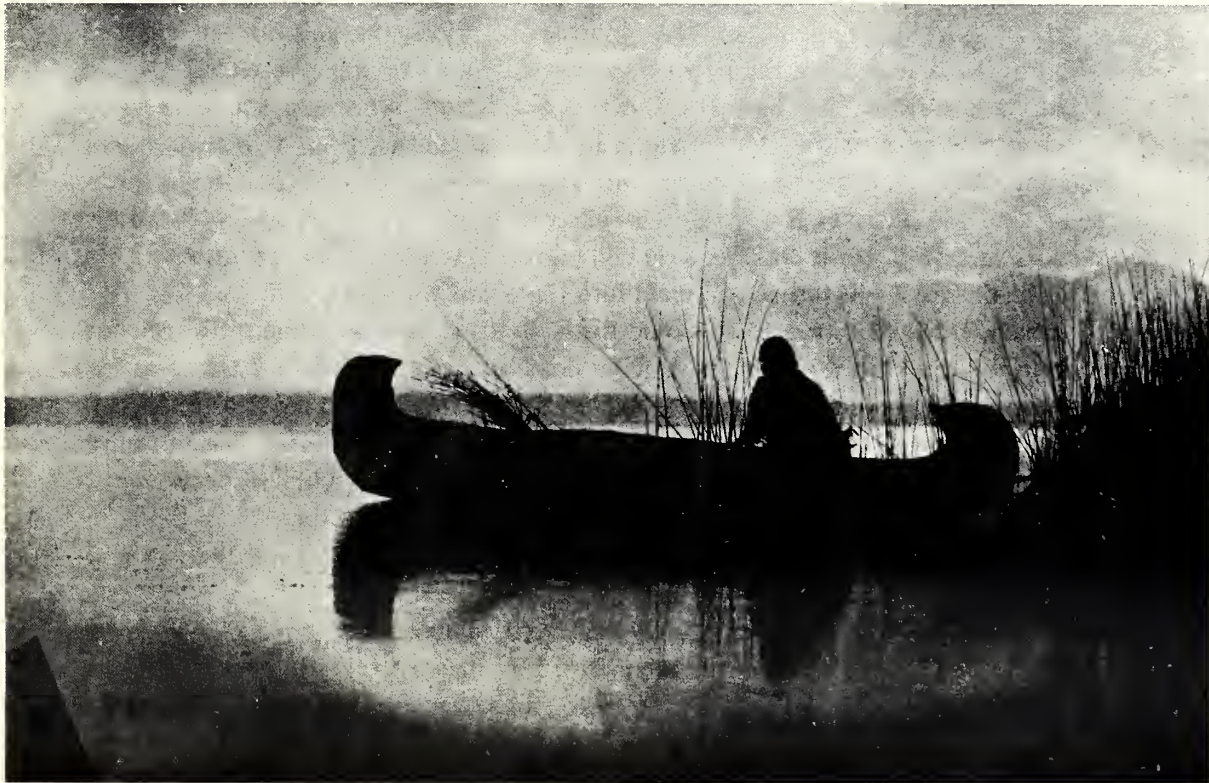
A few selections from her many publications reveal the scope of her interests: "The Early History of the Compound Microscope," "Federal Indian Policy and Tribal Sovereignty," "American Indian Attitudes Toward Nature," "The Power of Women in Three American Indian Societies," "Aztec and European Medicine in the New World, 1521-1600" and "A Helsinki Record: Native American Rights." Her Vita lists twenty-seven book reviews, papers and invited addresses: a vital and productive scholar indeed.

We are fortunate to have Professor Kidwell as Guest Editor of this special Tenth Anniversary issue of *The Creative Woman*. She has drawn upon her many contacts and friendships in the field to induce such luminaries as Paula Gunn Allen, Wilma Mankiller and Joan Hill; Carol Hampton, Kenneth Lincoln and Janice Gould, to write for us. She has provided an introduction to the issue, replacing the stereotyped images of Native American women by a true perspective, and written a book review of *Pueblo Storytellers*.

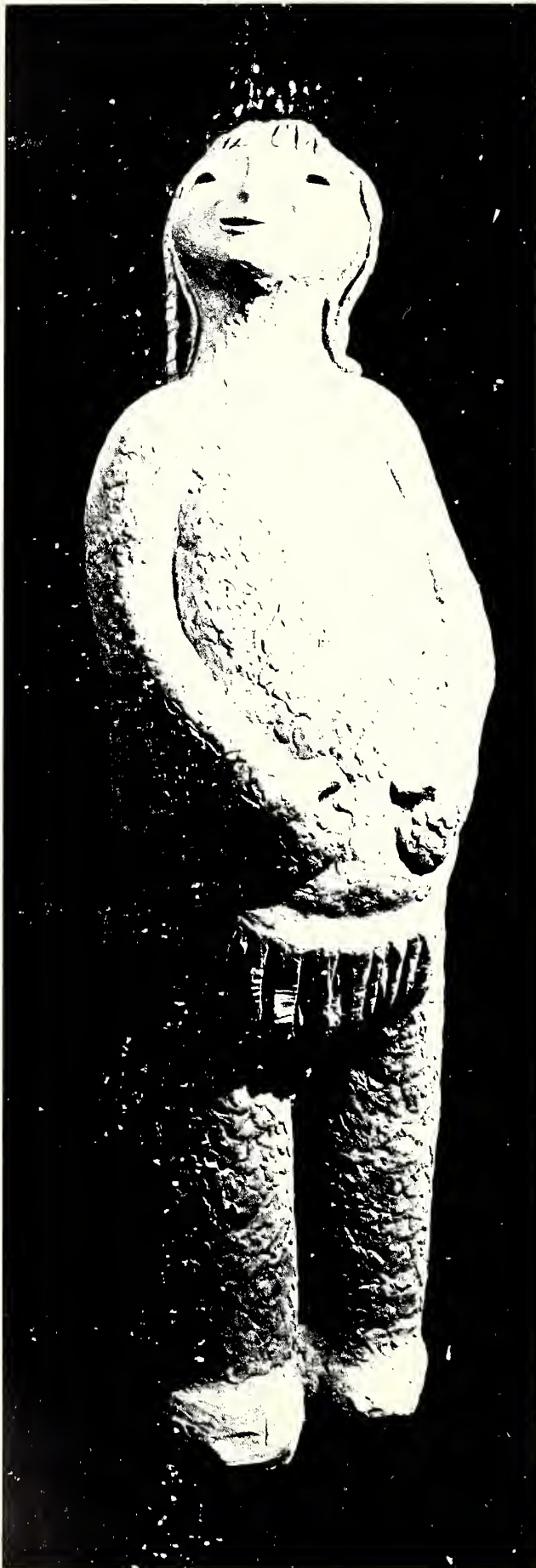
This is not her first appearance in these pages, however. Readers with long memories will recall her "American Indian Women: Problems of Communicating a Cultural/Sexual Identity," which she contributed to Volume 2, No. 3, Winter 1979, in our issue titled Women Across Cultures, A Symposium on Sex Roles and Communication.

With deep appreciation for Clara Sue Kidwell, her dedication, talent and hard work, we warmly welcome this Woman of Power to our celebration of ten years of publication, to make the invisible visible.

HEH



Kutenai Duck Hunter, from "Touch the Earth", T.C. McLuhan



NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN AND POWER

Clara Sue Kidwell

The stereotype of Native American women has been that of the drudge. The Indian woman, plodding stolidly behind her husband, appears in historical accounts of Indian cultures and has been perpetrated in numerous Hollywood movies and television shows.

Joseph Gilfillan, an Episcopalian missionary describing the Ojibwe Indians in Minnesota in 1901, commented on the tall, graceful Ojibwe male, bounding gracefully through the forest, while behind him plodded the short, stodgy, ro-tund Ojibwe female, bearing a tremendous pack on her back, with a papoose perched at the top in its backboard. Gilfillan speculated that the female's stature was a result of generations of burden bearing, that the women had literally been squashed down over time by their burdens.

But we must look beyond these stereotypes and speculations to see the reality of women's lives in traditional Indian cultures and in Indian communities in contemporary America. In traditional societies, women as bearers of children, gatherers of wild foods, and cultivators of crops had significant cultural power in transmitting knowledge to their children and significant economic power in controlling and distributing food resources. Generally, boys were sent off to be trained by male relatives at about the age of seven or eight, and girls stayed with their mothers to learn women's roles.

The lives of men and women in Indian societies were quite distinct. Sexual relationships in marriage were the only times of true togetherness in Indian life. In other respects, men had their social and ceremonial groups, and women had their homes, their young children, their subsistence activities, and often their own ceremonies. Men might spend long periods of time away from their homes as they took part in hunting, war, or ceremonial activities. Sexual continence was often an important part of purification before religious activities.

Contrary to the stereotypes, then, women were not subservient to men. Rather, two quite separate spheres of activity—those of men and those of women—complemented each other, and each had its importance in the whole of life. The stereotypes of Indian women in the historical accounts arise from the perceptions of European male observers, who viewed Indian cultures from their own patriarchal and hierarchically-

structured world views. The European god was male; European rulers were male, or women who ruled through their fathers' lines. In the initial contacts of European and Native American cultures, women became the intermediaries. The biological reality of sex was intermingled with the forces of cultural interaction. Women and their children provided the most direct mingling of two worlds. The Spanish conquistadors and the French voyageurs, men alone in a New World without women of their own culture, made alliances with native women. But these women were often not merely passive receptacles of European power.

Malinche, the Indian woman who became the confidant and perhaps the mistress of Hernando Cortez in 1519, played an active role in the history of the Aztec empire. Although she is sometimes castigated as a betrayer of her people, so little is known of the historical facts about her that her motives remain unclear, and they were probably as complex as the responses of any woman (or man) faced with the uncertainty of a time of cultural change. That she translated and mediated between Cortez and the subject tribes of the Aztec empire, we know. That she actively betrayed the Aztecs to Cortez, we do not. Whatever her motives, she was an active participant in events that led to a time of change for the Aztec empire, and her ability to effect change is a sign of power.

Pocahontas is another cultural intermediary. Her intercession with her father, Powhatan, supposedly saved the life of John Smith, founder of the Jamestown colony. The truth of the account is, again, subject to question because of Smith's reputation for exaggerating his own exploits. We know, however, that she ultimately married John Rolfe, an English tobacco planter and went to England. Whether she was a willing symbol of unity between the English and the Powhatan confederacy, or a hostage to keep the confederacy loyal to the English, we do not know. She bore a child, who died young, and she died in her twenties, probably of tuberculosis.

Sacajawea, a Shoshone woman, guided Meriwether Lewis and George Clark across the unexplored Northwest Territory of the United States in 1805-06. She was the wife of a French trader who lived in St. Louis, and she carried a young child in a backboard on the trek. Her knowledge of the geography of the Northwest Territory and the languages of several tribes there was essential to the success of the exploration. She wished only to return to her own people, and the expedition made that possible. She made her own decisions and was a willing guide, little realizing the legacy of disease, alcohol, and exploitation of the fur trade that she would leave

to Indian people as a result of her actions. She was an agent of change, albeit a very tragic change.

The power to effect change is still a part of the lives of Indian women in contemporary society. The changes wrought through historical circumstances have shifted the balance of power between Indian communities and the federal government. Reservations are generally characterized by high unemployment, low educational achievement, low wages, high rates of alcoholism, and extensive dependency on federal government programs of social service and welfare.

It is ironic that 1970 census data show that Indian women actually had higher employment rates than Indian men, the only group in the population of the United States for which this was true. Women had become the bread winners although their wages were lower than for employed Indian men.

In both reservation and urban Indian communities in the 1980's, Indian women are active participants. They do have the ability to make change. Politically, they are tribal chairpeople. They pass on knowledge as teachers. They create artistically. The women whose work is represented on the following pages are representative of this power to create, to preserve culture, and to bring about change. They draw from their own senses of Indian identity to bring something important to Indian people throughout the country. They are the cultural intermediaries of the present.



C'Koy'u, Old Woman

old woman there in the earth
outside you we wait
do you dream of birth, bring
what is outside inside?

old
woman inside
old
woman outside

old woman there in the sky
we are waiting inside you
dreaming your dream of birthing
get what is inside/outside

a hey a hey a hey a ho
a hey a hey a hey a ho
a hey a ho a hey a ho
a hey a hey a hey a ho

Paula Conn Allen





Malinalli, La Malinche, to Cortes, Conquistador

And among other gifts of tribute the now-subdued people of the Maya coast gave to Cortes their choicest girls, and among these the slave-girl, Malinal.

It was in March 1519, that the people of Tabasco gave the Lady Marina (as Bernal Diaz always speaks of her) to the strangers, and this was in the shadowland country at the far frontier of the Aztec confederacy. . . Estimates of the population, with the best recent guesses, based on Aztec tribute rolls hovering close to ten million. (Spain at the time had a population of four and a half million). . . But by the end of the year the Spanish expedition, by then only some four hundred men, held Moctezuma prisoner in the center of the city of Mexico, and through him commanded all the country.

The important point is that throughout the first march on Mexico, after they were joined by Malinal, the Spanish were forced to fight in only one instance—where only their immensely superior tactics saved their lives. Otherwise the road of their first penetration into the country. . . was paved by a string of diplomatic victories as remarkable as so many straight passes at dice.

-William Brandon

Ever I twisted you to my will,
oh great bringer of the goddess' wrath,
for you did not know that she sang
of your victories before your name was dreamed,
before your flesh was formed.
Ah, you marched, brazen and satisfied,
certain of your cunning and your strength,
and of your place before all of the gods,
straight for the heart of my chief enemy,
he who gave his life and gold in fear,
but in certain knowledge of his part:
only you, unblessed conqueror,
father of my son, remained ignorant,
boastful of a power you would never own.
You stride the continents of your fool's pride
not knowing why it is I, Malinche, whose figure
looms large above the tales of your conquests.

The Spaniard has a disease for which
the only cure is gold, you said; nor
did you know the disease was more of spirit
than of flesh: you thought to mock
the piety of him who bowed before you
of him who was my enemy, my companion,
my Beloved Moctezuma. He gave you
all the gold you sought, unprotesting.
Did you ever think to wonder why?
Or how it could be that you,
paltry in your barbaric splendor,
alone could ride
across the jungles and the hills
to the heart of Aztlan?
Did you never wonder who it was
that led you, let you in?
Did you never wonder why?

And I myself have been maligned: a fitting
irony. Maligned I, La Malinche,
chief of traitors, chief of slaves.
Betrayed I the father gods,
the false serpent who claimed
wings, who flew against
the grandmother sun declaring
prior right; who brought
murder and destruction, gold and jade;
who dreamed of war as tribute
for his blood drenched kings.
And knowing this, still
I prayed to the mother of us all,
she of sun and star who gives
both life and light,
anguished did I pray to the serpent,
woman who lies coiled and still, waiting.

The hour is late, Cortes.
And just as I stood
and watched you strip great
Moctezuma of his gold, just as I stood
guiding your words and your soldiers
with my gaze as I had guided them
with my many flavored tongue,
I now stand, silent, still,
and watch with great Cihuacoatl
as your time runs out.
Listen: in the barrios even now I hear
her wailing cry as it was heard
in the chambers of the ruler a cycle ago:
"oh, my beloved children,
where will I hide you?"
Look into the holy mirror that you stole,
from him who you stole it for his will:
see if in its depth you can see my face,
glimpse the falling feathers
of your dying king.

Paula Gunn Allen



Pocahontas to her English Husband, John Rolfe

In a way, then, Pocahontas was a kind of traitor to her people. . . Perhaps I am being a little too hard on her. The crucial point, it seems to me, is to remember that Pocahontas was a hostage. Would she have converted freely to Christianity if she had not been in captivity? There is no easy answer to this question other than to note that once she was free to do what she wanted, she avoided her own people like the plague. . .

Pocahontas was a white dream—a dream of cultural superiority.

-Charles Larson
American Indian Fiction

Had I not cradled you in my arms
oh beloved perfidious one,
you would have died.
And how many times did I pluck you
from certain death in the wilderness—
my world through which you stumbled
as though blind?
Had I not set you tasks
your masters far across the sea
would have abandoned you—
did abandon you, as many times
they left you
to reap the harvest of their lies.
Still you survived, oh my fair husband,
and brought them gold
wrung from a harvest I taught you
to plant. Tobacco.
It is not without irony that by this crop
your descendents die, for other
powers than you know
take part in this and all things.
And indeed I did rescue you —
not once but a thousand thousand times
and in my arms you slept, a foolish child,
and under my protecting gaze you played,
chattering nonsense about a God
you had not wit to name. I'm sure
you wondered at my silence, saying I was
a simple wanton, a savage maid,
dusky daughter of heathen sires
who cartwheeled naked through the muddy towns
who would learn the ways of grace only
by your firm guidance, through
your husbandly rule:
no doubt, no doubt.
I spoke little, you said.
And you listened less,
But played with your gaudy dreams
and sent ponderous missives to the throne
striving thereby to curry favor
with your king.
I saw you well. I
understood your ploys and still
protected you, going so far as to die
in your keeping—a wasting,
putrifying Christian death—and you,
deceiver, whiteman, father of my son,
survived, reaping wealth greater
than any you had ever dreamed
from what I taught you and
from the wasting of my bones.

Paula Gunn Allen



Molly Brant, Iroquois Matron, Speaks

I was, Sir, born of Indian parents and lived while a child among those whom you are pleased to call savages; I was afterwards sent to live among the white people and educated at one of your schools; . . . and after every exertion to divest myself of prejudice, I am obliged to give my opinion in favor of my own people. . . . In the government you call civilized, the happiness of the people is constantly sacrificed to the splendor of empire. . . .

Joseph Brant

We knew it was the end
long after it ended, my brother Joseph
and I. We were so simple in those days
taking a holiday to see the war,
the one they would later call
the revolution. It was that,
at that. Something turned,
something was revolting.
And when I learned that I was
no longer honored matron
but only heathen squaw,
when I learned my daughters
were less than dirt,
then I knew that it was changed,
and our lives were ended.
I wonder why I did not see it coming
all along.

It's a funny thing about revolutions.
Wheels turn. So do planets.
Stars turn. So do galaxies.
What's odd is that when a human
system turns, so many believe
it will turn their way.
So many think any turn is for the better.
I suppose we thought so,
my brother Joseph and myself.
I suppose we thought that if the whites
were fighting we Iroquois couldn't help
but come out ahead. We had held power
for so long. We played the international
political game to our advantage
for two hundred years—
seemed like we had always had
our way in things. Seemed like
we always would. The matrons had held
power for so long—for as long as anyone
could remember—how could we know
the turn events would take, the turn
that would plow us under
like last year's crop?

And now another turn is up.
They plan to blow it up.
Or poison it to death rather than change.
Fire and poison, their own tools
of conquest will conquer them, it seems.
They want revolution,
but not that kind, I guess,
any more than we hoped for
the kind of revolution that we got.
So they are planning to blow it up,
obliterate it. And good riddance
is what I say. What do I have to lose,
having lost all that mattered, all I loved
so long ago? And what is there more to lose?
Great cities, piling drifting clouds
of chemical poisons that have long since
killed the air? Rivers and lakes long since
dead beneath the burden of filth dumped into
them for years? Earth so sick of attempts
to cure it of its life that it is nearly dead?
Places now called Oregon, California, New York,
filled with those who replaced the people
long since murdered in the revolution
that turned the red lands white?
If death is in the wind
it will only blow our enemies away.
When a wheel turns
what is on the underside
comes up.

Paula Gunn Allen



The One Who Skins Cats

She never liked to stay or live where she could not see the mountains, for home she called them. For the unseen spirit dwelt in the hills, and a swift running creek could preach a better sermon for her than any mortal could have done. Every morning she thanked the spirits for a new day.

She worshipped the white flowers that grew at the snowline on the sides of the tall mountains. She sometimes believed, she said, that they were the spirits of little children who had gone away but who returned every spring to gladden the pathway of those now living.

I was only a boy then but those words sank deep down in my soul. I believed them then, and I believe now that if there is a hereafter, the good Indian's name will be on the right side of the ledger. Sacajawea is gone—but she will never be forgotten.

-Tom Rivington

1.

Sacagawea, Bird Woman

Bird Woman they call me
for I am the wind.

I am legend. I am history

I come and I go. My tracks
are washed away in certain places.

I am Chief Woman, Porivo. I brought
the Sundance to my Shoshoni people— I am
grandmother of the Sun.

I am the one who wanders, the one
who speaks, the one who watches,
the one who does not wait,
the one who teaches, the one who goes

to see, the one who wears a silver
medallion inscribed with the face
of a president. I am the one who
holds my son close within my arms,
the one who marries, the one
who is enslaved, the one who is beaten,
the one who weeps, the one who knows
the way, who beckons, who knows the wilderness.

I am the woman who knows the pass and where
the wild food waits to be drawn from the mother's breast.

I am the one who meets,
the one who runs away.

I am Slave Woman, Lost Woman, Grass Woman, Bird Woman.

I am Wind Water Woman and White Water Woman, and I come
and go as I please. And the club-footed man

who shelters me is Goat Man, is my son,
is the one who buried me

in the white cemetery so you would not forget me.

He took my worth to his grave
for the spirit people to eat.

I am Many Tongue Woman. Sacred Wind Woman,
Bird Woman. I am mountain pass
and river woman. I am free.

I know many places, many things.

I know enough to hear the voice
in the running water of the creek,

in the wind, in the sweet, tiny flowers.

2.

Porivo: Chief Woman

Yeah. Sure. Chief Woman, that's
what I was called. Bird Woman. Snake
Woman. Among other things. I've had
a lot of names in my time. None of em
fit me very well, but none of em was
my true name anyway,
so what's the difference.

Those white women who decided I alone
guided the white man's expedition across
the world. What did they know?

Indian maid, they said.

Maid. That's me.

But I did pretty good for a maid.

I went wherever I pleased, and
the white man paid the way.

I was worth something then. I still am.
But not what they say.

There's more than one way
to skin a cat. That's what they say
and it makes me laugh. Imagine me,
Bird Woman, skinning a cat.
I did a lot of skinning in my day.

I lived a hundred years or more
but not long enough to see the day
when those white women, suffragettes,
made me the most famous squaw in all creation.
Me. Snake Woman. Chief.

You know why they did that?

Because they was tired of being nothing
themselves. They wanted to show how nothing
was really something of worth.

And that was me. Indian squaw,
pointing the way they wanted to go.
Indian maid, showing them how they outta be.

What Susan B. Anthony had to say
was exactly right: they couldn't have
made it without me.

Even while I was alive, I was worth something.

I carried the proof of it in my wallet
all those years. They saw how I rode the train
all over the west for free. And how I got
food from white folks along the way.

I had papers that said I was Sacagawea,
and a silver medal the president had made for me.



But that's water under the bridge.
I can't complain,
even now when so many of my own kind
call me names. Say
I betrayed the Indians
into the white man's hand,
They have a point,
but only one.
There's more than one way to skin a cat,
is what I always say.

One time I went wandering
That was years after the first trip west
long after I'd seen the ocean and the whale.
Do you know my people laughed
when I told em about the whale?
Said I lied a lot.
said I put on airs.
Well, what else should a Bird Woman wear?

But that time I went wandering out west.
I left St. Louis because my squawman, Charbonneau,
beat me. Whipped me so I couldn't walk.
It wasn't the first time, but that time I left.
Took me two days to get back on my feet
Then I walked all the way to Commanche country
in Oklahoma, Indian Territory, it was then.
I married a Commanche man, a real husband,
one I loved. I stayed there nearly 27 years.
I would have stayed there till I died,
but he died first.

After that I went away.
Left the kids, all but one girl I took with me, but
she died along the way—not as strong
as she should be I guess. But
the others, they was Commanche after all,
and I was nothing, nothing at all.
Free as a bird. That's me.

That time I went all the way
to see the Apaches, the Havasupai,
all sorts of Indians. I wanted
to see how they were faring. I liked
the Apaches, they were good to me.
But I wouldn't stay long. I had fish to fry.
Big ones. Big as the whales
they said I didn't see.

Oh, I probably betrayed some Indians.
But I took care of my own Shoshonis.
That's what a Chief Woman does, anyway.
And the things my Indian people call me now
they got from the white man, or, I should say,
the white women. Because it's them who said
I led the white men into the wilderness and back,
and they survived the journey with my care.
It's true they came like barbarian hordes
after that, and that the Indian lost our place.
We was losing it anyway.

I didn't lead the white men, you know. I just
went along for the ride. And along the way
I learned what a chief should know,
and because I did, my own Snake people survived.
But that's another story.

One I'll tell some other time.
This one's about my feathered past,
my silver medallion I used to wear to buy my rides
to see where the people lived, waiting for
the end of the world.

And what I learned I used. Every bit
of the white man's pride to make sure
my Shoshoni people would survive
in the great survival sweepstakes of the day.
Maybe there was a better way to skin that cat,
but I used the blade that was put in my hand—
or my claw, I should say.

Anyway, what it all comes down to is this:
The story of Sacagawea, Indian maid,
can be told a lot of different ways.
I can be the guide, the chief.
I can be the traitor, the Snake.
I can be the feathers on the wind.
It's not easy skinning cats
when you're a dead woman.
A small brown bird.

Paula Gunn Allen



Iroquois Sunday: New York, 1982

"If it doesn't make awareness higher, it isn't art," he said, that Indian from Ottawa. He'd come all the way for the powwow. To sell some pictures and carvings he'd made. "You see the serpent, the woman, the man. You know what Freud says about serpents," he said to my friend, staring at her the way men do at women. She knew. Moved uneasy, angry, away. She told me about it later, after we left and went to the Dairy Queen in town for a bite to eat. He'd shown us his pictures, discoursing on the nature of true art. One of them was of two tree stumps that had a few branches rising slender toward the sky. If you looked at it just right you could see an eagle hovering, wings pointed down, over two heads, the man's looking up and out, the woman's lowered, humbly behind. He pointed that out, or you wouldn't have known one was a man's, one was a woman's.

"What kind of Indian are you?" I asked. He didn't say, but I know. Coyote Indian. There was a big stone grinding wheel mounted on a stand. The children played with it all afternoon. The powwow was at one of the women's houses that was built on a suburban plot. It was made of logs. Sitting on the front steps, we watched the clouds. The children tumbled in the grass like raccoons. When it began to rain, everyone went inside. Sat around, talking, watching the children play. The men wandered from room to room. They played poker with the Tarot cards. The women watched the corn soup boiling, the coffee dripping into the pyrex pot, the hot scones browning. Those women don't talk to eagles. They talk to snakes. To the grandmothers. They tell fortunes with the cards. They read omens beneath any sky. They count raindrops in time to every latest craze. They survive, grinding axes, teeth, fingers, and minds sharp as blades.

Taking a Visitor to See the Ruins for Joe Bruchac

He's still telling about the time he came west and was visiting me. I knew he wanted to see some of the things everybody sees when they're in the wilds of New Mexico. So when we'd had our morning coffee after he'd arrived, I said,

Would you like to go see some old Indian ruins? His eyes brightened with excitement, he was thinking, no doubt,

of places like the ones he'd known where he came from sacred caves filled with falseface masks, ruins long abandoned, built secure into the sacred lands; or of pueblos once home to vanished people but peopled still by their ghosts, connected still with the bone old land.

Sure, he said. I'd like that a lot. Come on, I said, and we got in my car, drove a few blocks east, toward the towering peaks of the Sandias. We stopped at a tall high-security apartment building made of stone, went up the walk past the pond and pressed the buzzer. They answered and we went in, past the empty pool room, past the empty party room up five flights in the elevator, down the abandoned hall.

Joe, I said when we'd gotten inside the chic apartment I'd like you to meet the old Indian ruins I promised.

My mother, Mrs. Francis, and my grandmother, Mrs. Gottlieb. His eyes grew large, and then he laughed looking shocked at the two women he's just met. Silent for a second, they laughed too. And he's still telling the tale of the old Indian ruins he visited in New Mexico, the two who still live pueblo style in high security dwellings way up there where the enemy can't reach them just like in the olden times.

Paula Gunn Allen

WHY WRITE HISTORY? A CADDO GRANDMOTHER'S PERSPECTIVE

Carol M. Hampton

"Tell me about the way it was, Grandmother," I said as a child. "What was the world like when you were young?" And my grandmother told me the stories of our tribal past. From those stories I learned how the world was created, how the Caddo people had come out of the earth and where we had emerged, how we had lived and how we should behave. From those stories I learned my own identity and the tribal history.

When I entered school I began to learn another history, the written record of the United States and its forebearers, the European colonies in North America. Public school teachers and their books taught me history from the perspective of the Europeans and ignored the ready availability of stories passed from generation to generation of the first Americans, erroneously named "Indians." We learned that Englishmen, Spaniards, and Frenchmen explored a largely unpopulated continent and brought civilization to the wilderness. We read stories of "savages"—noble and otherwise—and "bloody fiends" "lurking behind trees waiting to scalp innocent Europeans." Novels, movies, and television taught us that Indians were the bad guys, the enemy always vanquished by the hero. We learned that our tribes had created a barrier to progress and "manifest destiny" and had to be removed to lands far from the sacred sites of our ancestors. But that was a far different story from the ones we had heard from our grandmothers.

Some of us thought about the differences between our grandmother's stories and the stories we learned in school and from books, and we wondered. At the age of twelve I sat in a social studies class and learned that American Indian tribes existed in the history of Oklahoma. My teacher said that five tribes had been a part of Oklahoma's past. Excitedly, I leaned forward expecting to hear stories such as my grandmother had told to me. The Five Civilized Tribes had come to Indian Territory, later to be known as Oklahoma, and had, thus, contributed to the history of Oklahoma, she said. The teacher named the five—Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Seminoles—and I sat stunned. By the teacher's omission of them, it appeared that the Caddos were not only uncivilized, but they did not even exist. Actually, sixty-seven tribes had contributed to the history of Oklahoma. The Caddos were among a great list

of tribes ignored by history and social studies textbooks and by public school teachers.

Little of the history of this country that I learned in elementary or secondary schools or even in college corresponded to the stories I learned from my grandmother. Sometimes I found it difficult to recognize the same event, so differently did it appear from the two perspectives—Caddo and European.

As time passed, I began to wonder about discrepancies between the two or more versions of history. As I watched my children grow and enter school, I began to realize that history textbooks and social studies teachers had changed little. The dissimilarities between tribal and official history remained. I was discovering what my grandmother and all Indian grandmothers have always known: we have a responsibility to preserve traditions, including stories of our tribal past, and share them with our children. Only through us can tribal youth and others learn and, through that knowledge, preserve tribal history and identity.

This discovery led me to academic study and research in history, tools I would need for people other than Indian children to accept what I had to say. I came to the study of the discipline of history from a yearning to know my own past more fully—from a need to fit what I had been taught of American history into my own knowledge of tribal history and vice versa. From these beginnings most of us have branched out to include in our research and in our writings tribal histories other than our own, inter-tribal issues and pan-Indian movements. Our own desires to know more, and friends and students who expect us to know it all, have forced us to study history beyond our own tribe. We have found similarities in our various tribal histories and legends. And we have found differences—some of them profound. We can find errors in the written record, misinterpretations of events, and misunderstandings of people's motives. With academic tools Indian grandmothers and others can challenge "official" history—that which is accepted by academic historians.

Misinterpretations and misunderstandings frequently occur from a failure to listen. Academically accepted historians have until recently mistrusted the validity of oral history. Many of them have declined to listen to such sources and others have heard not what was said but what they expected to hear. Some non-Indian historians have written of American Indian heroes and heroines—those whom their

people have long revered—to deny their praiseworthy actions and depict our ancestral leaders as self-serving.

Native American historians have a responsibility and commitment to redress such grievances—to tell the whole story—the commendable and the corrupt, the self-sacrificing and the reprehensible. When we meet that responsibility we face the challenge of objectivity, sometimes sacrificing intimacy for distance. We also face the challenge of commitment to our people, those who have been misunderstood, misrepresented and maligned. We bring our own subjectivity to an understanding of our people, and yet we have a responsibility to the discipline of history which demands the ability to stand aside from a situation or event and assess and analyze it unemotionally. The task is far from easy.

Non-Indian historians of the Native American past have viewed native historians as a group in search of a “usable” past, rather than as disinterested observers. They little realize that responsibility to our people requires a commitment to objectivity. Anything less would be a disservice to our people and the faith and trust

they have placed in us. Non-Indian historians, however, correctly understand that we have a further responsibility to aid our people in their struggle to survive in an alien society—a society which degrades them and their traditions, a society which defames their heroes.

Others have written our stories from their own perspective. They will continue to do so as long as we allow them to present our stories unchallenged. Indian grandmothers have a unique position from which to preserve their history and instruct their young. They heard the stories first from their own grandmothers, learning to listen in the process. They know the value of listening, and other tribal members recognize this and share their knowledge, their stories. Our people will talk to us. They expect us to listen and remember. Our people know that when they tell their stories to non-Indians somehow something gets lost. The stories are changed—and the meaning misconstrued. We have a responsibility, a duty, to listen carefully and to carry the stories to new generations.

Carol M. Hampton holds a Ph.D. in history from the University of Oklahoma. She is associated with the American Indian Ministry of the Episcopal Church.

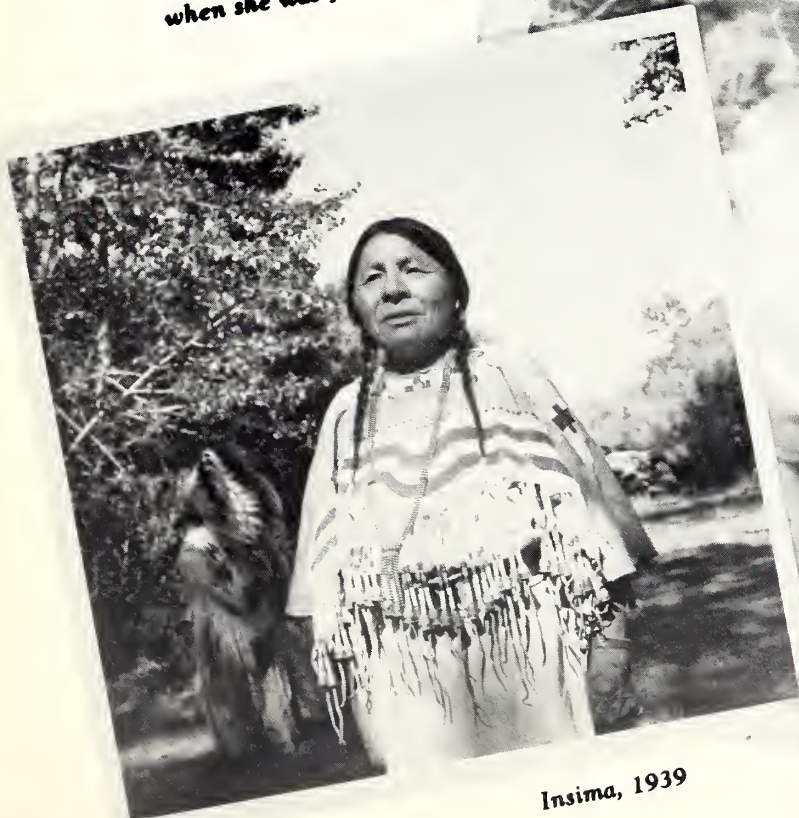
Photographs courtesy of
Susan Dietrich, adopted
member of Blackfeet.



Insima gave me this, 1939,
when she was young.



Catherine Grant, 1939



Insima, 1939



Kay Cadotte, 1939

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE CHEROKEE NATION

Wilma Mankiller, Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation

Wilma Mankiller was born and raised in the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma. Her family relocated to the San Francisco Bay area when she was twelve years old, and she lived and worked there as a social worker and community organizer until she decided to return to Oklahoma in 1976. She began working for the tribe and was elected Deputy Chief in 1983 and Principal Chief in 1986.

It is still unusual for a woman to achieve high political office in a large tribe. Women's power is most often within their homes rather than in public, political life. Wilma Mankiller shows, however, that the values of home and family that Indian women have always preserved and protected can be brought into a realm of public action that is revitalizing Cherokee community life and the Cherokee nation. Her philosophy of leadership and her role as a tribal chief have allowed her to make a significant impact on the lives of Cherokee people.

The following article is a condensation of two radio interviews and a speech that Ms. Mankiller gave at a conference on Indian economic development sponsored by the Seventh Generation Fund on the Navajo Reservation in September of 1986. The interviews were conducted by Victoria Bomberry, who provided transcripts of them and the transcript of the conference speech. Victoria Bomberry is the editor of Native Self-Sufficiency and the Community Education Program Director of the Seventh Generation Fund.

The Cherokee tribe is the second largest in the country. It is located in the Ozark foothills in eastern Oklahoma. There are about 80,000 Cherokee people, and most of them live in rural areas, some of which are very, very isolated. Because we don't have a reservation, the integrity of the tribe is in the communities, rather than the tribal government. In the old days when you would identify yourself Cherokee to Cherokee you would give your name and your clan. Today people identify themselves by their name and their community. Right away you can tell certain characteristics by where they come from. You say "oh, they're from Bell, they're from Peavine, they're from Kenwood, they're from Sally Bull Hollow." It's a point of reference with people.

We have about one hundred tiny communities, ranging from about 10 to about 200 families. I think everything revolves around the family. If we had families that were healthy mentally, spiritually and physically and knew their place in the world, then we would have everything. Everything evolves from the family. That's the beginning place and that's the ending place. So I think economic development, education or anything we're involved in has to involve all the elements of the family.

What we are trying to do at Cherokee is to begin at the beginning. There is so much work to be done to get people to trust their own thinking, their own ways of doing things. We're laying the groundwork for development. We're getting people to trust their own ability and instincts and to do things for themselves.

I've tried methods in organizing to get people to do things to help one another, and the way that we do it is to get everybody involved in a partnership together. I think it intrigues the media because they have a lot of stereotypes about Indian people. One of the prevailing stereotypes, at least in Oklahoma, is that Indians are lazy. It throws people off when they see Indian people out there working really hard in the heat of the summer and the cold of the winter and doing a lot of extra things that they don't have to do.

The most serious thing about stereotypes is that we believe those things ourselves. At home we've had racism or negative stereotypes that are bad enough in themselves but we start to believe those things ourselves. A lot of people who won't speak up for themselves or won't assert themselves will say that's just the Indian in me not to say anything. But that is just a stereotype that they are quiet, stoic and don't express themselves. It's not Indian to let people walk all over you and yet that is what they are saying. The stereotypes are damaging in the external world but when we believe it ourselves, we're really in trouble. What we're trying to do is to instill enough confidence in our own perception of the world to stay steady when someone challenges us.

What we've been trying to do for the past few years is to develop some successful models, then showcase those models to other Indian people so that we can begin to show people that small scale rural economic development is possible.

I've had a lot of people ask me, "Why are you fixing up housing? Why are you building water systems? Why are you building community centers? Why aren't you using federal funds for

economic development?" Well, that is economic development. Economic development is a system that requires the rebuilding of a nation and a people. And the way we are doing it contributes to the rebuilding of a people and their faith in themselves and their own ability to do things.

What I decided to do was to try some projects that would require Indian people in rural communities to engage in problem solving themselves. We started a model project in 1980. We went to a rural community like Pine Ridge with 60% unemployment, a lot of children dropping out of school, people feeling frustrated and fighting and drinking, people not holding on to family values. We looked at a community that had those characteristics. We decided to get them involved in changing the community themselves. We struck a bargain with them, a sort of partnership. They were frustrated and mad. They were mad at the Indian Health Service and the tribal government. They were mad at all those people who made promises to them and never showed up.

What we told them was "We'll raise the money for you, we'll organize, we'll act as the facilitators, we'll give you times and places you need to do things, if you will commit to build these houses yourself, if you will commit to build the water system, to rehabilitate the community building. If you will stay right with us as a partner so we're not doing it for you. We're just here to give you timelines and connect you to resources, and you plan and build."

At first it sounded strange to people, but as they thought about it and talked about it, they saw it as about the only way they were going to get what they wanted—water and housing. Every single Indian family in that community showed up and put in time on the water system. Each family had to contribute two months of labor in order to participate in the project. That was the bargain. They rebuilt the water system, they rehabilitated twenty houses; they built some houses. But something else happened that is more important. For the first time that community came together and did something as a group. There were all these factions—families who weren't speaking to one another for some reason or another. Perhaps old family feuds, but they had to come together collectively and build this water system, to build these houses. They had to come together and collectively elect a group called the Bell Water and Housing Committee. The leadership in that group was incredible.

Everyone had a role. If you couldn't read and write you could go get sand to use on the water

line. If you could read and write and could write well enough to write grant proposals, then you wrote grant proposals. Whatever it was, everyone was important and could contribute. So everyone felt good and could do something there. What happened, too, is something simple. People began to look around and see that they had the power and ability to change their community. It's their project, their community, and their changes that they have made there. It's a positive thing with that feeling of power and sense of accomplishment. They went on from there. They put up a senior citizens' center, some electric lights. They are starting some youth projects. When we were leaving they were planning a benefit pow-wow. They are doing a lot of things on their own.

After the Bell Project I put together what I call an enabling center, but in the bureaucratic structure it's called the Community Development Department. I started it and was the first director. I put all the funding and people together to have a permanent structure to continue this kind of work. Our message and our agenda is that we are attempting at the grassroots level to rebuild a nation and a people. In all my years of activism from an international level to the individual work with families, this is the first time I've seen this revitalization work for us.

Another good example of a project is Kenwood. I wanted to go there because I had heard that the housing was really poor. Kenwood is about 97% Cherokee, and about 80% of the people are bilingual. What they wanted to start working on was housing, and they wanted to find a way to lower their water bills. We discovered that the only way they could lower their water bills was to take over the water system themselves. Labor costs were raising the water bills, and many people couldn't afford to get on the system. A group of Cherokee men said they would take it over and begin to run it as a business. That's exactly what they are doing. The difference in their business is that no one is making any money. It's called the Kenwood rural water district, and it is run by volunteers as a benefit for the community. Their only goal was that everyone in the community have water.

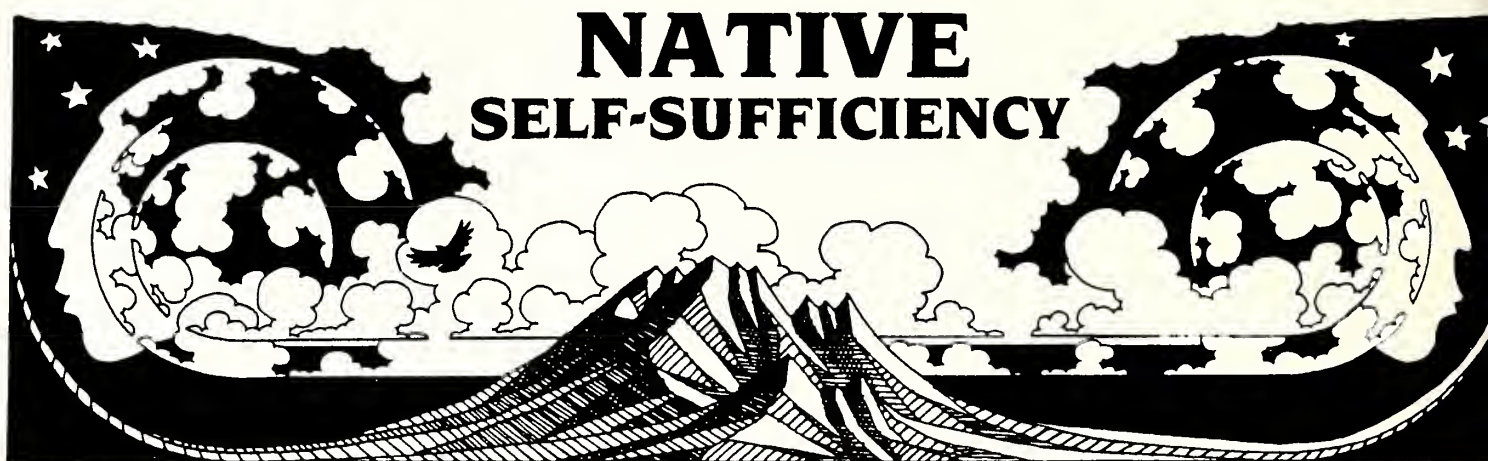
If you look to the people in the community themselves and ask them where they want to go and what they want to do, they know. Sometimes all they need is some outside help to figure out how to get there.

We're going to approach economic development piece by piece. If I had attempted to come in and change all of Cherokee Nation it could

never have happened. I would have been overwhelmed by everything that was going on. What we did is take it piece by piece, and it's taken a long time. I've been there for nine years, and I've been doing this kind of work for twenty years. We start with one community, and that works. You go to another community, that works. You go to another community, and on

and on. It's a building process. If you trust people, if you believe in people, and if you involve people in trying to resolve the economic problems in their communities, you can be successful.

What seems impossible is entirely possible. We can rebuild our Nations. Our people can do anything. And we start with where we're at.



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INDIAN ART: A FORM OF VISUAL PRAYER

Joan Hill

Joan Hill is both Cherokee and Creek American Indian, the descendant of a family prominent in the history of eastern Oklahoma and numbers among her ancestors, both Cherokee chiefs and Creek kings. Her Indian name is Chea-se-quah, which means Redbird, and she was born in Muskogee, Oklahoma. Her studio is located on the site of old Fort Davis of the Confederacy, home of the family since the 1800's, northeast of Muskogee. She has won 251 awards including twelve Grand Awards, five Special Trophies and a Commemorative Medal from Great Britain. (Including The Waite Phillips Special Artists Trophy) for her work in both traditional and non-traditional styles of painting. Sixty-six paintings and eighteen drawings are in the permanent public collections of museums and colleges, among which are the United States Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C., Philbrook Art Center, Tulsa, the Heard Museum, Phoenix, and the Museum of the American Indian, New York City, the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., Bicentennial Commission. Her paintings are represented in private collections in the United States and abroad and her work has been reproduced in fifty publications and eight film documentaries. In recent years she has traveled and studied in thirty-six foreign countries with the T.H. Hewitt Painting Workshops expanding the culture-consciousness of her American Indian heritage.

The artist was traditionally an integral part of the community in ancient tribal culture. Since there was no written language and only oral history passed down from the elders to the young, the artist served as both historian and philosopher for his or her people. Whether on hide, cave walls, on pottery, as personal adornment, or woven into fabric or baskets, the artist's work was an ethnographic record of the tribal history, religious and ceremonial life, personal exploits and nature. In this capacity, the artist was a contributor to tribal welfare and considered as an accepted part of the community. Both male and female artists were accorded this recognition and even today, judging from personal experience, there seems to be no discrimination.

In historic tribal days, Indian art was rooted in ancient cultural traditions and personal tribal heritage. Each color and detail of costume and decorative element had a tribal religious or



Of Wars and Rumors of Wars, Joan Hill

ceremonial meaning which was authentic. This use of symbolism extended the significance of the art work beyond the apparent. These symbols varied from tribe to tribe and from individual groups and clans. Traditional art tells a story through its visual impact, and contemporary Indian art gives a feeling of emotional impact rather than a story although it can tell a story also.

Although contemporary Indian art is a living, evolving art form, it owes a debt to tradition, for it gives a base or sustenance to the contemporary artist, enriching and enhancing the creative work. The modern Indian artist takes traditional stylized motifs and incorporates them into his or her work, filtering them through his/her emotional responses, fusing the elements of traditional design from within the framework of his/her heritage and integrating them with the artist's own personal experiences of today's culture.

What makes a work of art Indian art? The simplest definition is a work of art by an Indian of Indian subject matter, but artists, critics, and collectors all seem to agree that it is more than that. There is a mood, a feeling, an "essence," a pervasive sense of mystery, which imparts a unique spiritual element. This mystique of spirituality transcends all periods and styles and is the

single most distinguishing element in Indian art. It can make the most contemporary abstract or expressionistic painting as "Indian" in feeling as the most traditional ceremonial work of art. In the Indian psyche there is a very deep spiritual feeling for nature, an inborn love and respect for the land, the elements and the powers of creation, a sense of the eternal and the monumental. The order and harmony of things are very important to the Indian, and this mystical relationship of humankind to nature pervades the work of the Indian artist, often making the creation into a form of visual prayer. Personal vision is integrated with the spiritual element, recreating a world, not as it is "seen" but as it is "felt," often with an unreal realism, giving Indian art a special quality of mysticism, dramatic in impact. In Indian art the unknown is as real as the known. There is a feeling that the artist "sees" with the heart as well as the eyes. This "insight" gives the contemporary Indian artist the ability to communicate all aspects of the world, depicting moral and political as well as cultural and aesthetic values and in some cases, mixing the profound and the spiritual with social commentary.

My Creative Process

Art exists for me not to reflect reality as it is, but to create some other reality. Through my paintings I wish to transform my visual conceptions into a material form which can be shared with the world. Art widens the scope of the inner and outer senses and enriches life by giving us a greater awareness of the world.

Often I formulate an idea in my mind, think about it consciously and subconsciously as well, because frequently I will dream about something I remember from my life as a child or that was told to me by my parents or grandparents. Other times this process will be prompted by research to be sure each detail is authentic for a portrait or traditional painting or by something completely unrelated that I encounter or a chance pattern of sunlight and shade on a piece of moss-covered rock (this with my watercolors and semi-abstract oils). Then, when I actually start to work on the composition, the most successful works will seem to "flow" onto the paper or canvas almost, it seems, by themselves. Other times there will be a "block" and if I try to push it, the work does not jell properly, so over the years, I have learned to put it aside and work on something else, but I leave it where I can see it in passing, occasionally turning the composition upside down or sideways. Then one day, I will happen to look at it, and the pieces just fall in place mentally, and I know what to do.

The two paintings which you have chosen to use for *The Creative Woman* are both based on actual historical events, taking tribal ceremonial occasions as a basis for the paintings.

For "The First Ceremony-Mother and Child," the painting is almost traditional in concept, but is rather large and done in non-traditional materials, acrylic on canvas. My grandfather and grandmother's uncles were both chiefs of the Creek nation on my father, William McKinley Hill's side. The Cherokee chiefs come from my mother, Winnie Davis Harris Hill's side of the



Joan Hill in her studio.

family, although my parents are both of Cherokee and Creek descent. These grandparents told of the legends and traditions which had been passed on to them. In the nineteenth century, tradition called for a particular type of dress for the wife and son of the *micco* (king). (Creek chiefs were called kings in the Muskogean languages.) At the first ceremony for the child, according to verbal descriptions, the mother wore a swans' feather headdress, soft deerskin clothing, sea shell ornaments which were common in the Southeastern states before removal, and face decorations as shown in Catlin's sketches. In my painting the circle of the sun represents infinity, the never-ending cycle of life which is also symbolized by the mother and child. This painting and all my paintings of mothers and children are lovingly dedicated to the memory of my mother.

The title for "Of Wars and Rumors of Wars", (see page 19), is taken from the Biblical account in the New Testament and emphasizes the ever-present conflict among people. As it has been in the past and the tribal past, so it will always be. One critic said of the painting:

"here is a haunting example of the contemporary relevance of the historic experience of the American Indian." (Strickland, p.23)

This painting was one of a series of paintings on the subject, and the first was done during the height of the Vietnam War. This painting has attracted a great deal of interest, winning several first prizes and being reproduced for various publications. People seem to find something in the painting which speaks directly to them, and I thought it especially interesting that both the pro- and anti-Vietnam War advocates thought the painting expressed their particular viewpoint. The central figures in my composition are the members of the tribal council. A runner is bringing a rumor of impending war. The circular sun appears in the sky above the group, a symbol of infinity. In the background, smoke rises from a distant council fire. The tribal leaders are dressed in the costume of the turn-of-the-century. This costume, particularly the hat, is still worn today and was common in both the Cherokee and Creek tribes. The council meetings are as described by my grandfather, which he used to hold at High Spring Mountain in Northeastern Oklahoma. This painting too is almost traditional in concept, but again is larger and done with non-traditional materials, acrylic on canvas. It has been termed both traditional and non-traditional and "highly original" (Strickland, p. 19).

Clara Sue Kidwell has referred to "the power of artistic expression to create a sensitivity to



Cycle of Life-Mother and Child, Joan Hill

Indian cultures." Indian art is making an impact in many parts of the world and being collected not only in North America, but in Great Britain, Denmark, West Germany, and Japan. There are other countries too, but I know these have avid fans who not only collect but have "Wild West" and "Indian" clubs as well. In Copenhagen, our workshop group wanted to paint at the Tivoli Gardens, and at first we were refused, until it was discovered that in our group was a "real" American Indian. Also in China, the professors at the Central Art Academy in Beijing liked my Indian Madonnas so much that they asked for other photographs of my Indian work "to circulate all over the Peoples Republic of China."

Strickland, Rennard Dr. Native American Art at Philbrook. "The Changing World of Indian Painting and Philbrook Art Center." Tulsa, Oklahoma: Philbrook Art Center, 1980.

HOW DEEP THE WOODS ARE: PROBLEMS OF RETURN IN LOUISE ERDRICH'S POETRY

Janice Gould

It is a popularly held idea that Native American women poets write out of a sense of, and are closely bonded to, an oral tradition. But we are no more oral traditionalist than anyone else writing today. The fact that we have chosen to write (if it can be called choice) rather than to speak our words shows that the cultural structures and stresses which make orality possible and necessary no longer exist for us.¹

Our published writing now reaches a larger community than the extended family unit, the clan or the tribe. And, affected like everyone else with contemporary problems (alcoholism, drug abuse, rape, sterilization, child and spouse abuse, world-wide violence, to name a few) we let our texts reflect areas of anguish and struggle in ways which are familiar to non-Indian readers. This is not to say that the old songs and stories cannot speak to us, for I think many of us see in these narratives and songs, metaphors for our journeying, our search for identity, the sense of alienation and loss that many of us feel, the desire to return to a comforting and healing earth which we could claim as home.

While oral tradition may not be wholly open to us, it is perhaps, still not entirely closed to us either.² One of its psychic roots can be found in the idea that words have power. This is not a belief indigenous to native people alone. Poets, whether Indian or not, have long made use of charged language to convey thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and ideas. The charge is contained in what Andrew Welsh has paraphrased from Pound as "the making of music. . .the making of the bright image. . .and the making of the resonant word."³ Native American women poets, like other contemporary women poets, go back to these poetic roots as we attempt to empower our words, and ourselves through our words.

For Indian women poets, the issue of going back, of returning, is always complicated and problematical. If we could pose two realms of being and experience, one which is embodied in oral tradition, one embodied in contemporary writing,⁴ we might find Indian women poets on the road between the two. Certainly there are poems of journeying, with the destination always ahead, and that which is behind exerting an equal pull. For native American women, it



would seem that the pull of return happens in both directions. We move towards a spiritual, ancestral, as well as physical home (the reservation or other familiar earth/place) which we may fear is not wholly there for us. But what we've left is also tugging us back. Inevitably we have to go, back to the city, back to the boarding school. The problems and complications of these returns are central concerns of Chippewa writer Louise Erdrich. In this article, I will explore some of the complexities that show up in poems in her book *Jacklight*.

For Erdrich, the problem of return is often represented as a problem of returning home. In "Indian Boarding School: The Runaways," children hop a freight to get back to their home at Turtle Mountains, but they never make it. A cop is waiting for them "mid-run," to take them back to the boarding school where they are punished for having run away. And this poem contains a subtext which Indians more than anyone else might read: the old story of removal (and its present-day echo, relocation) by which Indians were moved, en masse, to territory which seemed of little value to whites. The Jackson administration's policy of removal resulted in the infamous Trail of Tears. And we're still on a trail of tears, with grief just one of our punishments, forming like the rails which take the children in Erdrich's poem closer to

home, "old lacerations that we love." It is an ironic line because the love for a home we can never have, in spite of our dogged attempts to get there, is at heart self-lacerating. "Indian Boarding School" reminds us that we can't go back on our own terms, and that what is really waiting for us is a return to an alienating, punishing place. And it is a poem which reminds us (and white readers) that we will continue, even perversely, to try to go back. So it can be read as a story of courage and persistence, a form of what Paula Gunn Allen calls continuance,⁶ since it is, or seems to be, a story of what helps us survive.

"Home is the place where, when you have to go there/They have to take you in," remarks the speaker in Robert Frost's poem. In Erdrich's poem "Family Reunion," home is not the place where Indians get taken back.

In this poem, a young woman, the speaker in the poem, drives her somewhat lecherous Uncle Ray from the city, back home, out in the rural country, for a family get-together. Ray is drinking the whole way, and once home, continues to drink himself into a half-conscious oblivion while managing at the same time to go out on a fishing expedition where he snags a big snapping turtle. In spite of Ray's efforts to kill the creature by blowing it to kingdom come, it somehow survives and drags itself back to the swamp from whence it was taken. As the family reunion folds, Ray's relatives stuff him into the car for the trip back to the city, the other home which is not home.

It is curious how, in contemporary Western society, we can almost never return home as an adult, how going back home forces us to return as children. When the speaker of the poem reports, ". . . We've been through this before./Even, as a little girl, hands in my dress," we hear a story of an earlier sexual molestation partially hidden in the text. Partially hidden, it is also partially known, and it remains beneath the surface like so many of our tales of abuse and sexual molestation, a ripple in the text of our lives.

In "Family Reunion," another tale of abuse is dragged up with the old turtle who won't die, but this one represents something about Uncle Ray. The fierce, stubborn persistence of a creature Ray tries to blow to smithereens is like the fierce, stubborn persistence of the man who is killing himself with alcohol. We would think he is a kind of Molotov cocktail, but Erdrich doesn't give us this "political" reading. Because finally, this is not a poem about alcoholism and sexual abuse, even though it is. In a weird way, it is a poem about grace, and in a crazy way,

about forgiveness. It is also a poem which is almost too proud to admit that this is some of what it's about. But when ". . . the angels come/ lowering their slings and litters," you get a feeling there ain't much to redeem, but even the broken and unhealed get something besides a cosmic "So what."

What does it mean, this turn at the end, to angels which seem in no way a part of the landscape of this family? Clearly, Erdrich is not returning to a Native American belief in wholeness, harmony, or empowerment. The resolution does not resonate in a traditional way, but instead introduces an undertone of Christianity which is a complicating element that shows up in other poems by this author, for example in "Francine's Room."

"Francine's Room" is a poem with many layers. One of the deepest layers can be found in the odd twists of Catholicism which give this poem some of its power and make it feel, finally, like a poem about redemption.

Spoken in first person, "Francine's Room" is a long meditation about how the speaker ended up in this life and in this room. She is neither as wry nor as jaded as one might expect, nor is a tone of self-pity or grief evident in her voice. The losses of home, family, and innocence are not ones which surprise Francine. Her dismay has more to do with a kind of detached shock in understanding something about the life of the men who use her and in the woman she is required to be. In the stanza which reads, in part:

. . . I first came here when I was a girl. It surprised me, the things two people could do left alone in a room. Not long and I learned. I learned what the selves are a man can disown till he lets them to life in a room.

A subject glimmers beneath the surface. What the speaker gives, at this moment, is not meant to be explicit. What are those selves a man disowns until he reclaims them in the presence of a prostitute, or any woman he feels he has somehow bought? We don't know, from the poem. But Francine, the ambivalent participant and witness, both protects and saves those selves which can't be allowed in the ordinary world, possibly because of their danger or violence or weirdness. A redemption is here, but found in a hard and terrible economy of loneliness.

Maybe what Erdrich is signalling here is another problem of return: people so far from a traditionally Catholic sense of goodness and innocence that no purity is imaginable which is not "washed in dust." But, of course, something washed in dust is not clean, no matter how many times the cloth is wrung.

The subject of male/female relationship is also taken up in the title poem "Jacklight," which opens with a poetically and historically rich epigraph, a quote from anthropologist R.W. Dunning. It reads, "The same Chippewa word is used both for flirting and hunting game, while another Chippewa word connotes both using force in intercourse and also killing a bear with one's bare hands." So it has to do with linguistic meanings, but it is also apparently about Chippewa sexual politics (at least as of 1959). It feels important to me that one underlying source of power for this poem comes from two words in Chippewa which never show up in the text: they remain unspoken, though their meanings are not unknown. It feels important to me as well that this epigraph, which discusses the unpredictable meanings of these words, is from a Western, academic source. What problems of return does this signal?

One thing this suggests is that there is no way of returning to any pure sense of what it means to be Indian. "Jacklight" is located in the woods, one place which, in the American imagination, means home for Indians. The players in this drama are hunters, also part of what the American imagination can allow Indian men to be. But we are not in the landscape of time immemorial. The men are not traditional hunters going about a sacred task in a ritual way. These guys get themselves boozed up to tramp into the woods in leather boots, with their steel guns and their lantern. Whatever this poem could have meant about an original power between, or for, the sexes cannot be found in any uncomplicated way. Besides that, likening men to hunters and women to their quarry is a strategy often found in Western literature. And beyond being an anthropological statement about Chippewas, the epigraph shows that this poem is going to be about violence in male/female relationships. Because of this, we can read "Jacklight" to be about the problems of heterosexual romance.

Although "Jacklight" uses repetition of key lines and phrases, this is less reminiscent of native American chant than it is of Western verse. The poem builds up images in units of three, which work something like Western music, as theme, variation, and resolution. In the fourth stanza, for example, we find in the first two lines "them," "faceless," "invisible." In the second two lines, "raw steel," "mink oil," "tongues of sour barley." Notice how the images expand: "raw steel" rather than "steel." Finally, we find "mothers buried chin-deep," "fathers with scoured knuckles," and "sisters of crushed dogwood." There is a momentary release from intensity in the break between the fourth and

fifth stanzas. And then in the sixth stanza there is a coda which returns us to the theme, "We have come to the edge of the woods." Now a variation is played out that dramatically alters the theme. When the speaker says, "it is. . .their turn to follow us. . .they take the first steps not knowing/how deep the woods are and lightless./ How deep the woods are," the sense of threat and mystery is overwhelming. Clearly we have been taken to a female domain. And the drawing in of the hunters to the nest where the female animal rests and sleeps and dreams is extraordinary and powerful. But what has persuaded the hunters to "put down their equipment?"

Finally, the ending of the poem is ambiguous. Even if it harkens back to a place of primal, sacred, and female power, it is difficult to stay in the place, to make this a poem which rests comfortably in a purely Native American terrain.

At the beginning of this article I said it is popularly believed (mostly by Native American women poets ourselves) that we write out of an oral tradition. In a recent issue of the Canadian journal *Fireweed*, the claim of our oral rootedness is renewed. The editors state that since Native American women write out of an oral culture, any judgment of our poetry should be based on our speaking the truth and on our speaking for "our people." "It is this," they write, "on which we should base a critical analysis and not judge our words based on non-Native literary standards."⁷

This invites argument, for it implies that Native American women poets are closer to oral roots than other poets and are thus more apt to speak the truth. It assumes that the spoken word is somehow truer than the written. It implies that the truth is simple and not complex. If we could base a critical analysis on truth-speaking, we could depend on Native American women's words to always carry exact and unvarying meanings that everyone agrees upon. It implies that Indian women always share the same truth.

I am Indian and this does not mean that I have experienced Louise Erdrich's life or Louise Erdrich's truth. I am Maidu and not Chippewa, and perhaps Erdrich brings to her writing something distinctly Chippewa that as non-Chippewa I cannot see or understand. I have to depend on "non-Native literary standards" to write about Erdrich's poetry. Being Indian does not give us, beyond all others, some mysteious, spiritual power to know the truth. We have to work for it too. Erdrich's book *Jacklight* shows us the woods, the place we return to with difficulty, the place it is not easy to enter. And perhaps what induces us in, without a light to see the clear path, has less to do with truth than

we imagine. Perhaps it has more to do with the exercise of pure will and desire, for it means, finally, to go into a place we have not been before. It is a complex place, a frontier for Indian and non-Indian readers alike. Going in will not be easy. But *Jacklight* holds the invitation to enter.

Footnotes

¹See Walter Ong, *Interfaces of the Word*, Cornell University Press, 1977, the chapter on African talking drums, in which Ong lists seven salient features of oral cultures.

In a writing culture these features are not salient and need not be considered as marks of written performance. On a technical level, then, native American women poets have no more reason to employ these features than non-Indian writers.

²It should be noted, however, that oral tradition is not a relic; it has not died out among native Americans. I think it can be said, however, that where a native American language has fallen into disuse due to a lack of speakers, the oral tradition has undergone immense change. It dies in its traditional form when the last speaker of a language dies, even if a legacy of orality persists for the children and grandchildren.

³Andrew Welsh, *Roots of Lyric*, Princeton University Press, 1978, p. 16.

⁴I would like to stress that in imagining native American oral tradition and contemporary writing as two separate realms, I do not see their locations on a spectrum of values with oral tradition at one end representing the primitive, and written poetry at the other, representing the civilized. Needless to say, oral traditions use sophisticated verbal arts, and the cultures in which they have flourished and survive are rich and complex.

⁵Louise Erdrich, *Jacklight*, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, New York, 1984.

⁶Paula Gunn Allen, *The Sacred Hoop*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1986.

⁷Ivy Chaske and Connie Fife, editors, with Jan Champagne, Edna King, and Midnight Sun, *Fireweed: A Feminist Quarterly*, Issue 22, Winter, 1986.

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Janice Gould is of the Maidu tribe of California. Her poetry has appeared in *Sinister Wisdom*, *Calyx*, *Ikona*, *Berkeley Poetry Review* and *Extraordinary Women/Ordinary Lives*.



Flathead Child, from *Touch the Earth*, T.C. McLuhan

MEDICINE FOR ALL

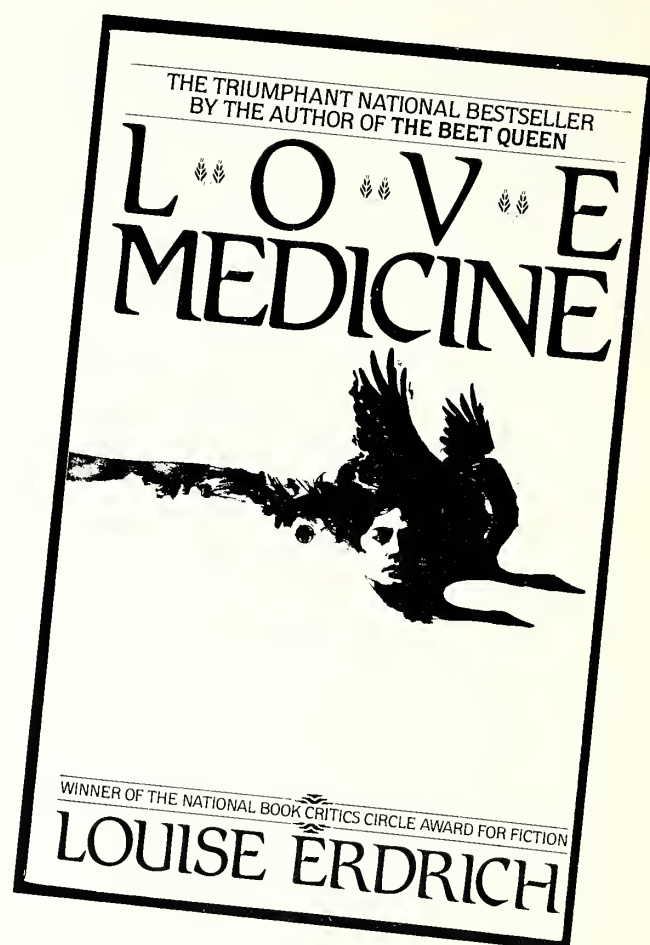
Kenneth Lincoln

When Louise Erdrich wrote "I'm gonna rise . . . one day I'm gonna rise. They can't keep down the Indians," she might have been predicting the extraordinary renaissance in Native American writing that has emerged in these mid-eighties. In 1983 following my *Native American Renaissance*, Joseph Bruchac collected contemporary Indian poetry in a state-of-the-art anthology, *Songs From This Earth on Turtle's Back*.

Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz freshly collated traditional tribal texts in *American Indian Myths and Legends*, the most complete gathering now in print. Raymond DeMallie validated the Black Elk transcripts in *The Sixth Grandfather*, and Vine Deloria gathered commemorative essays on John Neihardt in *A Sender of Words*, Jarold Ramsey considered the classics of oral native literatures against EuroAmerican masterworks in *Reading the Fire*, while Michael Castro's *Interpreting the Indian* tracked modern literary permutations of Indian materials. Simon Ortiz drew together the finest contemporary short fiction in a Navajo Community College anthology, *Earth Power Coming*. And Peter Matthiessen published two new books on Native American affairs, *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse* and *Indian Country*. All this came in 1984.

Native Americans are now writing prolifically, particularly the women, who correlate feminist, nativist, and artistic commitments in a compelling rebirth. "A sense of familiarity with what is strange, a willingness to face, to articulate what is beyond belief, to make it seem frightening and natural at the same time lies in much of the writing of American Indian women," Paula Gunn Allen forecast in "The Grace That Remains," (1981), a line borrowed from Roberta Hill Whiteman. In 1984 this Oneida poet published her first book of quietly stunning verse, *Star Quilt*. Her lines stretched taut with blank verse rhythm, startling rhyme, consonance, and spells of imagery:

We unstuck a walking stick walking
down a wall and shoved it in a jar
where it hung, a crooked finger.
Whiteman spoke with a disturbingly common,
childlike intensity to her son:
We're caught in some old story.
I'm the woman winter loved
and you, the son of winter, ask
where did he go and why.
This poem gets cut to just one sentence:



You grow old enough and I get wise.

It was "a quality of voice that guides me," Roberta Whiteman has said, and that native listening to one's own voice surfaced in Paula Allen's first novel, *The Woman Who Owned the Shadows*, as well as in Joy Harjo's poetry, *She Had Some Horses* and in Linga Hogan's *Eclipse*. Hogan reflected,

If I spoke
all the birds would gather
in one breath
in the ridge of my throat.

Rayna Green edited *That's What She Said*, an anthology of sixteen American Indian women poets, while Gretchen Bataille and Kathleen Sands scanned the horizons of a renewed Mother Earth in *American Indian Women, Telling Their Lives*, all within 1984.

One new writer now focuses national attention, Louise Erdrich, a mixed-blood Chippewa from North Dakota. *Love Medicine* won the 1984 National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction, and then the American Academy of Arts and Letters prize for the best first publication of fiction, and a companion set of poetry, *Jacklight*. A "wondrous prose song," claimed the *New York*

Times, her writing probes the why and how of existence. Erdrich's Kashpaws and Lazarres of Turtle Mountain come like Faulkner's Caslins and Snopses tumbled into one Indian/White epic pack, a cracker dynasty in the turbulent guts of America. Turtle Mountain remains the most densely populated of 315 Indian reservations—six by twelve miles of 10,000 mixed-blooded hill folks straddling the Canadian border—near the exact geographical center of North America. "And so we stuck together on that strip of land that was once sun beat and bare of trees. Wives and children, in-laws, cousins, all collected there in trailers and more old car hulks. Box elder trees and oak scrub planted and grew up. We even had a gooseberry patch."

Here, three Kashpaw generations live out modern twists of an American epic in *Love Medicine*. The central character, the girl Marie, finds herself involved in a deadly psychic battle with a cloistered nun who at one point scalds her (for Jesus), and rams a fork through her hand. During lifelong combat between the two, Marie is raised to stigmatic glory and finally is forgiven at the side of the nun's fetid deathbed. The man, Nector, finds his wife in the virgin martyr, Marie. In various scenes he is shown striding home with geese tied to each arm, being caught loving her on the hill and subduing Marie's wildness; raising broods of kids; trying to leave Marie for his sensual high-school sweetheart Lulu; burning down Lulu's house; and finally being brought home by his daughter to Marie's darkly waxed kitchen floor.

The pathos of helpless passion bonds a man and a woman. "A dark numbing terror had stopped her mind completely. But when he touched her he was weeping." Characters find themselves locked in their pasts, determined by poverty, racism, religion, war on their own soil, the bizarre human condition forever fascinating and confusing. They reach to each other, weeping, terrified, needy, murderous. They touch, crumbling, unable to add up the price or the pieces, unable to draw the pattern of things together. Indians, yes. The Kashpaws go on in the special ethos of pride and defeat and survival. They portray the estrangement of America's first peoples, reserved inside history, clawing their ways home, hanging on, making pies and waxing wood floors and hunting geese and wiring tractors together. They live much like the rest of rural working America, but with an added inflection of pain, desperation and humor. Theirs is another aboriginal tongue and cultural heritage, and immeasurable enduring strength that is "native" American. Theirs is the ache of self-definition

and going on in the face of all odds. "Society? Society is like this card game here, cousin. We got dealt our hand before we were even born, and as we grow we have to play as best as we can." (This from a political prisoner modeled on Leonard Peltier, a Turtle Mountain Chippewa now serving two consecutive life terms in federal prison).

A dramatic potential smolders in these tales, always ready to break through the weathered thin crust of the characters' clan history, their precious and pathetic family tribalism. All the stories finally collate: "I could see how his mind leapt back, making connections, jumping at the intersection points of our lives: his romance with June. The baby given to Grandma Kashpaw. June's son by Gordie. King. Her running off. Me growing up. And then at last June walking toward home in the Easter snow that, I saw now, had resumed falling softly in this room." From first to last, beginning to ending snowfall, parts and peoples all relate through fourteen tales told by seven mixed-Indian narrators. These are voices of clan lineage gathering the ghosts of an extended Indian family, tattered in the unraveling warp and woof of American history. Each voice rings clear and resonant to itself, ragged and uncut, like a rough gem; the whole gathers and glitters as naturally polished stones in the bed of a Turtle Mountain stream flowing into a birch-ringed lake of stories.

The psychic depth of these narrations shines even more darkly phosphorescent like Lyman's sinking red convertible headlights which probe the river for a shell-shocked brother who walked in until his boots filled and he drowned. "The headlights reach in as they go down, searching, still lighted even after the water swirls over the back end. I wait. The wires short out. It is all finally dark. And then there is only the water, the sound of it going and running and going and running and running." Characters are endlessly walking through downpours; contrarily, the crumbling winter dust of history dries on their tongues. These characters are like the water-walking Jesus bugs on these hill lakes, hatching from the opening sketch of North Dakota blizzard "spring," a country of soggy birch, aspen bottoms and frozen pothole lakes; like migrating birds in the great flyway of America, north-to-south-to-north again with the seasons, traversing the Canadian border, just west of the White-owned Red River Valley, the richest river bottomlands in the country. It is a land of "opposite thinking," say the Cree around Lake Winnipeg.

From the opening pages this novel's prose startles a reader awake: "Even when her heart

clenched and her skin turned crackling cold it didn't matter, because the pure and naked part of her went on. The snow fell deeper that Easter than it had in forty years, but June walked over it like water and came home." Nector speaks of Marie, his child-virgin-wife martyred on the hillside, after their ab-original sin: "The sun falls down the side of the world and the hill goes dark. Her hand grows thick and fevered, heavy in my own, and I don't want her, but I want her, and I cannot let her go." First Man, First Woman, an old Adamic or literally "red earth" story. And of a motherless child's grief the narrator confesses: "It was a hurt place, it was deep, it was with her all the time like a broke rib that stabbed when she breathed."

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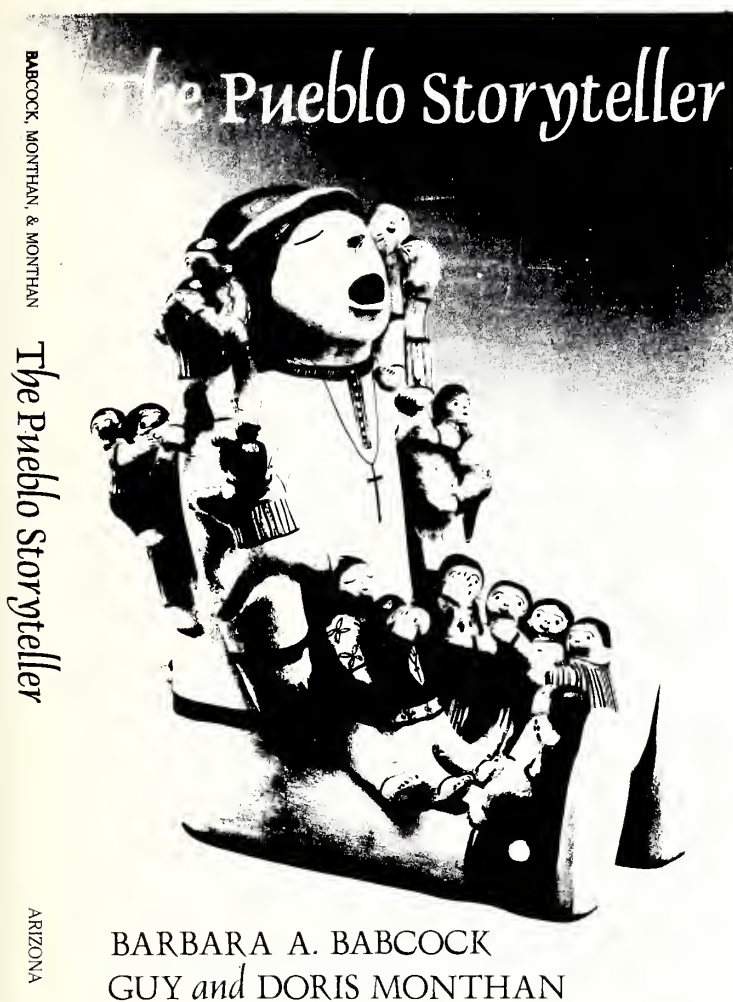
Dr. Kenneth Lincoln is Associate Professor of English and American Indian Studies at the University of California at Los Angeles. He is an adopted member of the Sioux tribe and grew up in Alliance, Nebraska. Harper and Row has just published his travel narrative about contemporary Plains people, The Good Red Road: Passages Into Native America (with Logan Slagle, 1987).

This article has been adapted from the Preface to the paperback edition of Native American Renaissance (University of California Press, 1985) and from a lecture he gave at a Conference on the Teaching of American Indian History, sponsored by the D'Arcy McNickle Center at the Newberry Library, 1986.

THE PUEBLO STORYTELLER

by Barbara A. Babcock, Guy Monthan
and Doris Monthan (Tucson:
University of Arizona Press, 1986).

Clara Sue Kidwell



BARBARA A. BABCOCK
GUY and DORIS MONTAN

Figurative art is a relatively recent tradition in Pueblo societies. Prehistoric Pueblo pottery shows a sophisticated development of forms for vessels, but representations of human and animal figures are very rare. Some figures were made as offerings in certain ceremonial activities, and by the late nineteenth/early twentieth century, such figures began to be made for the tourist trade. In 1964 Helen Cordero, a Cochiti potter, created the first storyteller, a seated figure holding a number of children. According to Cordero, the figure represented her grandfather, who was noted for his storytelling ability. With that figure, a new tradition in Pueblo art was born.

The Pueblo Storyteller is a handsomely produced book that traces the history of this artistic tradition. Its most impressive feature is the twenty-seven color plates of storyteller dolls by a number of contemporary Pueblo potters. The text includes descriptions of the general stylistic features of clay and color of pottery produced in different pueblos and the unique features of each artist's work within that general style. Appended is a summary chart of the family relationships among makers of storytellers. A glossary provides a guide to technical terminology, although when terms such as "polychrome" and "motif" are defined, it appears that the book is aimed at readers who have no knowledge of pottery making. An extensive bibliography gives references to general works on American Indian ceramic art.

The tone of the book is informal and personal, and its nature is descriptive rather than analytical. Barbara Babcock is herself a collector, and she has personally interviewed the artists whose work is included in the book. She spends a good deal of time describing the ways in which they learned their techniques and thus reveals that the tradition of making storytellers is being handed down largely in family lines. In several cases, three generations of a family are all involved in the process.

One might describe *The Pueblo Storyteller* as a coffee table book, although it is smaller in size than most such books. It is intended to appeal to the general reader. Certainly the quality of reproductions and the charm of the figures



Female Storyteller
with 6 children
8 inches high
by Marie G. Romero,
Jemez, 1977.

themselves will have great appeal. The reader with a scholarly interest in figurative ceramic art will find it too general to be useful, although the biographical information on the artists might be valuable.

What the book does that is important is to demonstrate how a new artistic tradition has developed, how it has connections with older forms of art but how it has evolved as a uniquely Pueblo art form in contemporary society. The Storyteller figure has become an important category in Indian Fair, the annual crafts and art show in Santa Fe, New Mexico, that showcases outstanding examples of these works, and in the tourist trade. But it is not simply a *de novo* form designed to capitalize on a buyer's market.

Helen Cordero described her first storyteller as modeled on her grandfather, and she described the process of teaching others to make them as akin to the process that the storyteller represents—the transmission of knowledge by oral tradition from generation to generation. *The Pueblo Storyteller* is a book to enjoy for the beauty of its illustrations and its tribute to the artists who created its images.



Skokomish woman, from *Touch the Earth*, T.C. McLuhan

NATIVE WOMEN WISDOM

The Sacred Hoop

Paula Gunn Allen

Beacon Press Books (1986)

Janice Gould

Anyone who has researched the history and ethnographics on Native Americans, or those who are interested in Native American traditional and contemporary literature, will find Paula Gunn Allen's book, *The Sacred Hoop*, an important, useful and stimulating source of information on Native American thought and culture. Allen writes both persuasively and controversially about women-centered, spirit-centered pre-Columbian cultures of the Americas, about their near demise at the hands

of colonial invaders, about their recovery, both in the continuation of traditional, ritual practices, and through the writing of contemporary Native American authors. Allen's vision of Indian America serves as a revision; placing women at the center of Indian existence allows certain questions to be asked which have never been thoroughly or straight-forwardly addressed before. Why have Indians survived? What is the place of the spiritual in our lives? What has been left out of the ethnographics of Native people? How does the spiritual (the vision) manifest itself in contemporary life? What is the role and function of the Native American artist/writer?

There has been a resurgence of interest in Native Americans lately, I think especially in the

wake of the feminist movement. One strand of this interest has to do with an anxiety about racism: some white feminists are anxious to assimilate the experience of non-white Americans and other Third World people into their political concerns and understandings. Another strand of this interest is a move away from the political toward the spiritual, a move which is not recent, but which has been gathering momentum and solidarity for a number of reasons over the years. *The Sacred Hoop* is a book which speaks to the concerns of both feminists and others who are looking for a more equitable, just and life-affirming society. I would say that one of the most appealing aspects of Allen's book has to do with how it is a response to what is going on here and now—to arms proliferation, nuclear madness, the dialogue of detached men who seemingly control our fate. There is a profound need to believe that something else existed once, besides this mad system of self-annihilation. In this way, *The Sacred Hoop* is speaking in an entirely new way of what might be called "subsistence." These subsistence needs are beyond what anthropologists categorize as food, clothing and shelter. Even more basically, this is subsistence which has to do with the need for love, respect and protection. This is one premise of *The Sacred Hoop*, that Native Americans, and

therefore Native American societies, are spirit-centered. Each of the seventeen essays in various ways explicates the meaning of being a spirit-oriented people. Allen defines spirituality as connected to a ritual, ceremonial sacred sense of the world and one's place in it. Indians are oriented to the spiritual, she argues, through our woman-centeredness. All life, all thought, all creation is a gift of the Mother or Grandmothers, and many, if not most tribes adhere, sometimes centrally, sometimes peripherally, to this knowledge. Allen calls this women-centered view of the universe, or the system of pattern of existence based on this view, a gynocracy, and uses her own people, the Keres, as an example of one of the most steadfast groups of gynocratic people left in this hemisphere. She argues that even those tribes which, at least by the time of white invasion were male-oriented, had principle female deities whose presence necessarily invoked the sacred, who carried with them the accoutrements of power—for example, the Sacred Pipe which White Buffalo Woman brought to the Lakota.

Allen is the best scholar I know who is doing literary criticism of works by Native American authors. And the book is all the more valuable because it is written by an American Indian woman, a mixed-blood, whose perspective on



Apache Reaper, from *Touch the Earth*, T.C. McLuhan

American Indian culture non-Indians do not know or experience. She speaks with clarity and insight and with a kind of profound know- ingness that is invaluable.

The central part of *The Sacred Hoop* is a series of essays on Native American prose and poetry. She looks at the problems of alienation and identity in our work, how we go back to the mythic and visionary as sources of inspiration, and how we deal with the frightening specter of our genocide through the power of continuance in our traditions.

Reading Allen's book, I came upon the first, clear, cogent discussion of being mixed-blood that I have yet read. I want to tell my friends, "Read this book, because I need you to understand me."

Although *The Sacred Hoop* remembers and replaces female-consciousness in Native American consciousness, by so doing it does not discount or obliterate the role or power of males in Native American culture. In fact, it accounts for and honors male power as a "tradition (that) centers on encounters with death that lead to transformation." Male and female power are complementary: "the male principle is transitory, it dies and is reconstituted." On the other hand, "the female principle. . . is permanent; it remains. . . He is what comes and goes, she is what stays." Allen argues however, that we must "shift our attention from the male, the transitory, to the female, the enduring," for in doing so, "we realize that the Indians are not doomed to extinction but rather are fated to endure."

The Sacred Hoop more than postulates the existence of gynocracies in the Americas. Allen claims "that for millenia American Indians have based their social systems, however diverse, on

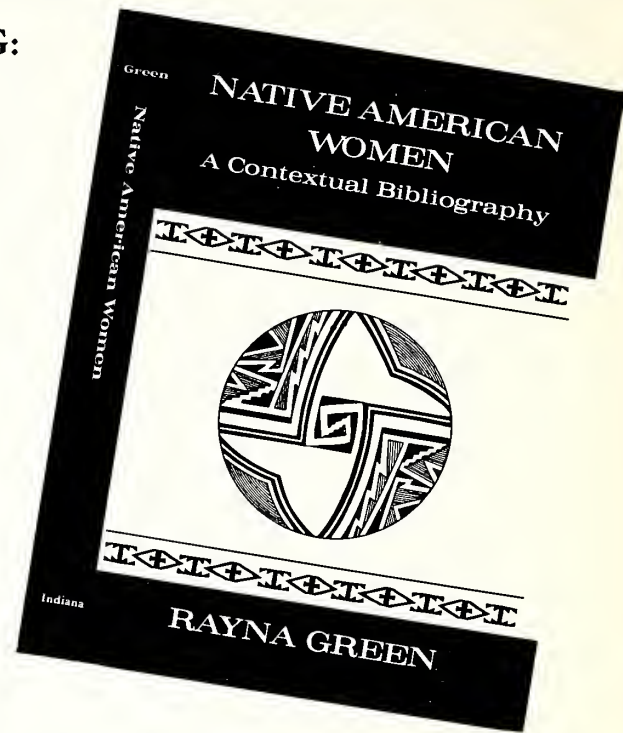
ritual, spirit-centered, woman-focused worldviews." What troubles me about this claim is not that it is made, but that it is a premise which is not fully substantiated in the book. I found myself hungry for more citations of evidence, for footnotes of sources both Indian and white, for something more than generalizations from a few tribes to the many. My frustration has to do with that longing I think many of us feel of wanting to reclaim the honor and power we believe was once accorded the Mothers, of that almost poetic need to go back to that as our first source of love, and the beginnings of how we imagine the shape of the world to be. If *The Sacred Hoop* recovers the feminine in American Indian traditions, it does so by convincing an intuitive belief I have about the sacredness of women's power in a non-patriarchal society. But that is not enough for me. I think the enormous power of this book rests in this intuitive vision, a vision which may not be compatible with a lot of footnotes. And even if we recover and discover new and old sources of evidence, I feel it may be in a form so difficult, fragmented and distorted that it will leave us with much uncertainty about many things in Native American culture, even with that shift in focus from male-centeredness to female-centeredness, "the focus on continuance rather than on extinction," which Paula Gunn Allen argues is vital to our survival.

Review by Janice Gould whose poetry has appeared in Sinister Wisdom, Calyx, Ikon, Berkeley Poetry Review and Extraordinary Women/Ordinary Lives. She is of the Maidu tribe of California.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Prepared and annotated by Barbara Conant
Circulation and Media Librarian
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Extensive bibliographies on the Native American woman are available in the following three sources:

Allen, Paula Gunn. *The Sacred Hoop, Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Tradition*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1986.

Contains a "Selected Bibliography," which includes Biographies and Autobiographies, Histories, Novels, Poetry, Anthologies and Critical Studies of the American Indian woman.

Bataille, Gretchen M. and Sands, Kathleen Mullen. *American Indian Women, Telling Their Lives*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984.

Contains an annotated bibliography of American Indian women's biographies and autobiographies.

Green, Rayna. *Native American Women, A Contextual Bibliography*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983.

An annotated list of approximately 700 entries, including books, articles, films, recordings, government reports and dissertations about the Native American woman.

Selected articles of interest:

Boyer, L. Bryce; Boyer, Ruth M. and de Vos, George A. "An Apache woman's account of her recent acquisition of the shamanistic status." *Journal of Psychoanalytic Anthropology*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (Summer 1982): 299-331.

Details the acquisition of shamanistic status and the conscious and unconscious mechanisms of psychological adjustment.

Fiske, Jo-Anne. "An Interpretation of Carrier Indian Women's Cultural Perceptions as Political Rationale for Equality." Association Paper, International Sociological Association, 1986.

Examines Carrier women's political actions in relation to women's self-perceptions, their rights and duties as heads of households, and their view of their traditional culture.

Kasey, Cynthia Rachel. "A Reinterpretation of Power Roles of American Indian Women in the Past and in the Present." Association Paper, North Central Sociological Association, 1985.

Defines certain functions and power roles played by Indian women within the context of their societies, and offers some reinterpretations of native women, their rights, and their importance to their people.

Lake, Robert G. "Shamanism in northwestern California: A female perspective on sickness, healing and health." *White Cloud Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1983): 31-42.

Presents views on sickness, health and healing.

Livingston, Katherine S. "Contemporary Iroquois women and work: A study of consciousness of inequality." *Dissertation Abstracts International*, Vol. 35, No. 6-A (December 1974): 3194-3195.

Outlines the role of Iroquois women in the family, the economy, the polity and in the consciousness of inequality.

Lynch, Robert N. "Women in Northern Paiute Politics." *Signs*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Winter 1986): 352-366.

Discusses the rise to political prominence of Northern Paiute Indian women, who assumed control of their reservation's tribal council, as well as their regime's effects on reservation political life and their eventual ouster from office.

Rozee-Koker, Patricia; Dansby, Pearl G. and Wallston, Barbara S. "In search of a cross-racial female identity: The quest for commonality." *Academic Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (Winter 1985): 269-286.

Considers cross-racial female identity and affective response to being female.

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Dear Helen, 5/16/57

The Creative Woman issue is absolutely beautiful. I'm greatly honored to have my article appear alongside such a distinguished Stein scholar as Allegra Stewart, and the pictures of Stein in her astrale and mine are treasures. Thanks so very much!

Yours,
Doris Wright

The *Creative Woman* pleased me very much indeed. I put everything else aside and read it from cover to cover. It **is** gratifying to see "Mabel Dodge" in print, though I wonder whether anyone else will find it interesting (especially anyone unfamiliar with Stein's work). Reading Stein was tremendously stimulating—the Gestalt was so apparent but so elusive! I was seduced into the most detailed analysis of her vocabulary and grammatical structure in quest of significance. I've never been able to accept the painting analogy, though Stein herself made it. (Is "generalization" the same as "abstraction"?)

Doris Wight's interesting emphasis on Stein's escape from Leo's domination is valid. Biographical interpretation aside, Stein was also endeavoring in this period to illustrate the creative process—she herself had little sympathy with Freudian psychology. (Leo was psycho-analyzed.) Wight's interpretation of the "carafe" image is comparable to Plath's "bell jar" image (referred to by Rothe.) Wight treats the "carafe" as the container of the ego—I see it as the container for the super-ordinate self.

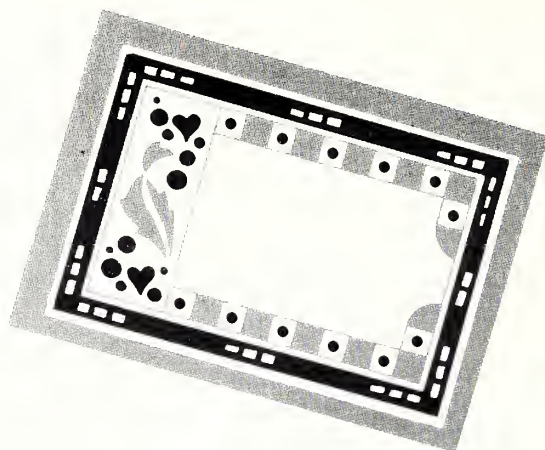
Mary's review of "She Always Said, Pablo" was delightful. Her letter has what I always associate with Mary—crisp, vivid language—the presence of an individual behind her words.

I'm going to a conference on the Bloomsbury Group at Oxford, August 12-22. I've been reading Virginia Woolf's diary (six volumes), and re-reading her novels.

Thank you for the copies of *The Creative Woman*—and for your generous recognition. I am proud of your work—proud to have had a part in your life.

love, Allegra

I'm overjoyed to receive my copies of the magazine! I had no idea it was so beautiful and impressive. I am privileged to be included. I plan to subscribe and order some extra copies.
best wishes, Patricia R. Schwartz



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Our thanks to Dover who over the years has presented us with many free samples. Thank you from *The Creative Woman*.



FINE LINE CREATIVE ARTS CENTER

Claudia Snow

"Bless this place, Spirit of the North, as you touch the people who will gather here in the coming months. Give us the gift of patience and hope in this winter season. Let us be especially patient with ourselves as we search for ways to live creatively." With these words from the Songs of the Four Winds, the Fine Line Creative Arts Center was blessed at its opening the autumn of 1986. The Center, in a restored barn set in the Fox River Valley countryside west of St. Charles, Illinois, is a very unusual place. Breaking the prairie horizon, the structure appears as a huge ship upon the harsh, flat sea of the Illinois landscape. Bare, brown-black fields sweep wave-like, around it. The Center, housed in this unlikely ark, holds a dream. The dream takes its form in the awakening and nurturing of the creative spirit within the people who come there to visit and study.

"The world is hungry for artistic expressions of the spirit. Within each person lies creative energy."

The mission statement of the Center speaks of a social need which is keenly felt by its founders. The evolution of the Fine Line from its beginnings as a gallery to its present form as a learning center runs parallel with the life of its director, Denise Kavanagh, School Sister of St. Francis.

After a career of twenty years teaching junior high students, Kavanagh left her job as a school principal and enrolled at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois, to do graduate studies in art. "I wanted to learn to weave but every time I found a class, it was full." With no idea of how she would eventually utilize her training in art education, she said simply, "Something always happens."

The religious community of which Kavanagh is a member has a long history of being responsive to the needs of society. In the 1870's, social work, in the form of teaching and nursing, was the major focus of the order. With changes in the society, new and changing social needs have presented themselves. In response to those needs, the work of the order has changed. The Sisters, along with supporting themselves and their community, are encouraged to cultivate their individual gifts to further share themselves with others. This concept of sharing self with a larger community is central to their work.



Reflected view, of March sky, from Fine Line Creative Arts Center window.

It was with this in mind that one of the Sisters, a lawyer, asked Kavanagh to run a gallery which would represent the artwork of the nuns. The Fine Line Gallery opened in Geneva, Illinois, in 1979. Kavanagh had a loom in the back of the gallery. One day, a visitor inquired about the availability of weaving lessons. It was with that first student that a new ministry unfolded.

Within a short time, the gallery ran out of space. A new location was found a few blocks away in the bottom half of an older home. With the move, the emphasis of the Fine Line shifted from its existence as a gallery to becoming a place where people could come to get in touch with their own creativity. Alyce Van Acker, a Dominican Sister and Judy Niemet, a Sister of Mercy, lent their talents and the Fine Line became a learning center.

"Release of creative energy enhances self-esteem. Awareness of creative power enables people to improve their lives and the lives of those they touch."

Thus stated, the philosophy of the Center identifies a connection which appeared to be either lost or never developed in the numbers who

come for art instruction. Talking about her work as a teacher of creative expression through her medium of weaving, Kavanagh says that she sees that the creative flow is negated in peoples' lives. "Whether they lose touch early on, as children, or sometime later, I don't know. We don't see such a dramatic response in children because children don't allow us to see. Adults are so responsive. They come because they want to learn."

Kavanagh speaks about people, women in particular, who, at the onset of their classes, make the declaration, "I have no talent. I'm not creative." Whether this is made as a statement of fact or a plea is a matter of speculation. The teacher counters such disparaging remarks with the statement, "If you can count to four, you can learn to weave." Kavanagh asks her pupils to consider their day-to-day "aesthetic outlets": interior decorating, meal planning, or the simple act of bringing flowers into their homes. "Creative opportunities help peoples' self-image. We are all hungry for experiences which help us feel better about ourselves." And realizing the importance of each individual's need to celebrate and, in some manner, articulate creativity, the staff at the Fine Line is dedicated to opening the gates within each who comes there to learn.

"The value of the artistic experience is not only personal, but has ramifications which affect family and community life."

By 1986, literally exploding at the seams with students, looms, shelves of yarn, spinning wheels, warping boards, racks of finished artwork, the Fine Line once again needed a larger space.

The search for adequate quarters ended when the staff found a barn for sale. The new site was not just any barn, but the magnificently renovated Twin Silos. Recently converted from use as home for livestock, associated manure and farm equipment, to the home of a St. Charles physician, Twin Silos was perfectly appointed for use as an arts center. Aside from the attractiveness of its size, 8,500 sq. ft., the structure itself qualifies for awards in architectural design. The interior had been sandblasted to restore the beautiful wooden beams, floors had been carpeted and tiled and the roof opened with skylights. The barn had been transformed into a place of incredible beauty.

Since its opening in September, 500 students have attended over 18 different classes. The courses range from instruction in weaving, spinning, knitting, crochet and stitchery to pottery, basketry, painting, and papermaking. Special workshops and lecture series are offered. As well as its varied curriculum, the center holds ex-

hibits containing the artwork of internationally recognized artists. On the third Monday evening of each month, an open forum is held for the discussion of artistic dreams and dilemmas. A mailing list of 1,600 and an army of volunteers to do odd jobs around the center speak of an excited response in the community.

"Artistic experiences are integral to the quality of life in our communities."

This closing thought of the Fine Line mission statement touches on an important aspect of the curriculum offered. "The center will provide an atmosphere for releasing and channelling creative energies. The goal of our curriculum will be to provide good instruction, valuable learning experiences and quality leisure activities for the public we serve." Courses at the center are not offered for academic credit. Of this Kavanagh says, "There is already too much stress in our society. The center is a place for people to come to peace with themselves. The courses enhance that. Our teachers want to share their gifts and provide an atmosphere of tranquility."

Wednesday evenings are busy at the center with classes in weaving, pottery and knitting. It is a good time to see what is going on. My visit was on a Wednesday in early March, Ash Wednesday, as it happened. It was late in the day when I got to the center. The raw, northwest wind was split by the song of the first red-wing blackbird. A harbinger, I think. Blarney, the gray-muzzled watch dog, announces my presence. The warmth and light, once inside the door, is welcome. Down the hall and into the central classroom. The space is a maze of looms. At the far end of the room on a woolly rug, the feline mouse patrol, Murphy and Finnigan lie curled together, dreaming of tall grasses and sunlight to come. The Sisters, the teachers with whom I speak about the Center, wear the ash marked crosses upon their foreheads, a gentle reminder of the Lenten vigil they keep. In a corner, a student stands silently assessing her work, tape measure draped around her shoulders. **Class** begins as Denise works with students on a eight harness twill drafting lesson. In a quiet exchange, the students are guided to excitement over newly-learned skills. "Oh yes, now I see..." Outside, the wind playing with the loose battens, reminds me of the world beyond these walls and another blessing from the Song of the Four Winds goes with me into the night: "Bless this place, Spirit of the West, as you bring us to the end of our days here. Give us the gift of satisfaction in work well done, and joyful anticipation of what lies ahead in our creative journey."

*Claudia Snow, a free lance writer living in Crete, Illinois, has written for **Scottish Field** and **Nit & Wit** magazines.*

WOMEN-CHURCH

Claiming Our Power



MUJER-IGLESIA

Reclamando Nuestro Poder

CLAIMING THEIR POWER WOMEN-CHURCH WILL GATHER IN CINCINNATI

Several thousand women, calling themselves Women-Church, will gather in Cincinnati at the Convention Center the weekend of October 9-11, 1987.

Women-Church Convergence, a coalition of 26 women's groups and organizations from the Catholic tradition, is sponsoring an ecumenical, inter-faith conference entitled, "Women-Church: Claiming Our Power."

"Women-Church will gather in Cincinnati to support each other and to claim our economic, spiritual, sexual and political powers," stated Diann Neu, Conference Coordinator. "We invite church leaders to join us, to listen to our concerns, and to act on our behalf with courage."

Dagmar Celeste, first woman of Ohio, will welcome conference participants. Other speakers include Peggy Antrobus, economist from Barbados; Marga Buhrig, one of the Presidents of the World Council of Churches; Charlotte Bunche, feminist theorist; Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, world renowned feminist biblical scholar; Kwok Pui Lan, Asian theologian; Mary Gordon, award-winning novelist; Dolores Huerta, of the United Farmworkers; Mary E. Hunt,

feminist liberation theologian; Theresa Kane, past president of Leadership Conference of Women Religious and spokesperson for North American nuns during the Pope's last US visit; Frances Kissling, pro-choice activist; Eleanor Smeal, President of N.O.W.; Gloria Steinem, President of Ms.; America Sosa, Salvadoran Co-Madre; and Mary Luke Tobin, member of the Loretto Community who attended Vatican II.

Participants in the conference include women from various age, economic, lifestyle, racial and ethnic backgrounds, women from religious congregations, local and national organizations, peace and justice groups, parishes and base communities across the United States. A large number of scholarships are available for low income women. Men are not excluded from conference participation.

The Women-Church Convergence emerged from a 1983 national conference entitled "From Generation to Generation: Woman Church Speaks." Since that time an ever-growing coalition of groups committed to being a "a discipleship of equals" has been meeting to continue that work. The Convergence's membership is drawn from both national organizations and from the many new local Women-Church groups throughout the country.



NEW MEXICO TRIBES Population (approx.)

15. Taos	900
16. Picuris	100
17. San Juan	700
18. Santa Clara	540
19. San Ildefonso	225
20. Nambe	135
21. Tesuque	140
22. Cochiti	431
23. Santo Domingo	1,851
24. San Felipe	1,347
25. Santa Ana	376
26. Zia	464
27. Jemez	1,448
28. Sandia	198
29. Isleta	1,783
30. Laguna	2,464
31. Acoma	1,944
32. Zuni	5,155
33. Navajo	51,369
34. Jicarilla Apache	1,928
35. Mescalero Apache	1,970

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CREATIVITY WEEKEND AT FOREST BEACH A SPECIAL TENTH ANNIVERSARY EVENT

Save the weekend of October 30-November 1 for an intensive small group experience in ceramics, photography, painting, writing, video, or therapeutic massage. The workshops will be led by expert, professional women, in a beautiful setting on the Michigan shore, ninety minutes from downtown Chicago, co-sponsored by *The Creative Woman* and the YWCA.

This will be a high energy event at modest expense. The total cost for room and board, tuition and materials is \$80. A \$10 deposit will hold your place until the October 23 deadline. Limited financial aid is available.

For further information, contact Jane Heckman, Forest Beach Director, at 312-372-6600. To enroll, complete the following information and mail it with your deposit to Jane Heckman, YWCA Forest Beach Conference Center, 37 S. Wabash, Chicago 60603: your name, address, daytime and evening telephone numbers, and your first, second and third choices of workshops. We will send you confirmation of your enrollment, instructions on how to get there and what to bring.

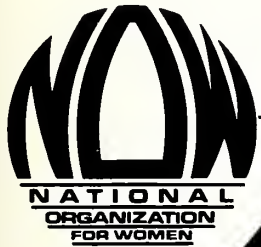
Join fifty women in a place of peace and tranquility in the golden sand dunes, lakeshore, and Michigan woods, where you can find and release your own creative power in a medium of your choice.



"WELCOME TO THE CITY OF SISTERLY LOVE!" — A REPORT

The weather was perfect in Philadelphia for marching and demonstrating as several thousand of us arrived to attend the annual conference of the National Organization for Women. NOW is the nation's largest feminist organization with more than 150,000 members and 756 chapters. We were celebrating our twenty-first year of activism and the 200th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution, along with the Congress who were in town the same day. This provided an opportunity to point out that the document of our founding fathers is still a flawed document, since women's rights are not yet included. They will be! A Torch Run for the ERA and a Bicentennial ERA March, with two thousand women marching in white, brought the message to Philadelphia. Themes of the conference were: "We the Women...", "Our Time Has Come," and "The Feminization of Power."

The business of a NOW conference is multi-dimensional: first, there is the election of officers; it is an inspiring event to observe how the two factions (Molly Yard and Noreen Connell and their respective slates) struggled to prevail by vigorous speech-making, caucusing, leafletting, even to the balloons, noisemaking and banners of political contest, all without taking the low road of personal attack. Molly Yard won by a clear margin, largely because of her powerful persona and her long track record of activism: she comes across like a reincarnation of Susan B. Anthony, charged with eloquence and total commitment. Then there are the resolutions to be debated and voted upon: highlights of this year were bylaw changes that would strengthen the central authority of the organization; a campaign to defeat Bork's approval to the Supreme Court; a resolution to support the Christic Institute's suit against the "Secret Team" of the CIA, some of whose deeds are even now coming to light in the Iran-Contra Hearings.



Ellie Smeal, President of NOW



WELCOME TO THE CITY OF SISTERLY LOVE



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BY AND ABOUT WOMEN

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Many important leaders of the women's movement were there, lecturing, leading workshops. One heard Eleanor Smeal, Elizabeth Holtzman, Gloria Steinem, Betty Friedan, Linda Ellerbee and Sonia Johnson. Patricia Schroeder announced for the presidency from the rostrum and immediately raised \$350,000 in contributions and pledges. Folk singers and comedians were there, dancers and entertainers. Book sellers and other exhibitors were there. It was an opportunity to solicit new subscribers and to promote the magazine to booksellers, one of whom, The Book Gallery of New Hope, placed an immediate order. It was wonderfully cheering and energizing to find oneself in the company of so many women of like mind, women who are open and friendly and interesting and serious.

What did I bring back with me? Half a dozen new books, a handful of buttons, and some tapes, both audio and video, to pass around. Readers who wish to borrow any of these tapes may write to our editorial office. We want you to share the excitement and stimulation of these remarkable and inspiring women:

Patricia Schroeder's address at the plenary session.

Ellie Smeal, "The Long Hot Summer."

Sonia Johnson, "The Metaphysics of Liberation."

Panel on Feminist Spiritual Community.

N. Klimas and M. Fletcher on "Women and the Medical Reality of AIDS."

VIDEO: Live from the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Celebrating NOW's Twenty Years. "A star-studded show which celebrates the victories, mourns the defeats, inspires the future and highlights the great historic moments in NOW's history." (Two hours)

Another source of reassurance that "Failure is impossible" has come from the experience of assembling this special issue on Native American Women. Had Native peoples been completely subdued in spirit, they would have perished during the first century of subjugation. How vital these voices are! How penetrating to our American consciousness! These unquenchable spirits, saving and preserving the ways, thoughts and traditions, the values of harmony with nature and peace among nations . . . they give us hope.

As we enter our second decade of publishing, we rededicate ourselves to the liberation of all women and their creative powers. Join us.

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SACHEEN LITTLEFEATHER, Apache/Yaqui Indian, is a resident of Marin County, California. She has been in the holistic health field for over ten years, and in the movie business as an actress/consultant and member of the Native American Actors Guild for several years. She received an Emmy Award Recognition as advisor/consultant for "Song For Dead Warriors" Ballet/Film, PBS New York, Great Performances-Dance in America.

Sacheen has a degree from Antioch University in the field of Holistic Health and Nutrition with an emphasis in Native American Medicine. Sacheen is a recipient of the 1986 Traditional Indian Medicine Achievement Award from the National Catholic Health Federation, for her participation in the Traditional Indian Medicine Program at St. Mary's Hospital in Tucson, Arizona. She is an Associate with Dr. Lewis Mehl, M.D., at the "Center For Recovery From Illness" in San Francisco, CA, and also conducts Native American Nutrition & Health Education workshops in Indian country.

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